

The American Mercury

JANUARY 1949

35 CENTS

MARY MARGARET McBRIDE

by ALLEN CHURCHILL, page 7



SENATOR HUMPHREY MEETS THE PRESS

★ ★ ★

WOMEN ARE HOUSEHOLD SLAVES

Edith M. Stern

ARABS AND JEWS ARE COOPERATING

Helen Warren

SATURDAY NIGHT, *A Story*

E. V. Griffith

REPORT ON THE C-MEN

Frederic Sondern, Jr.

PLIGHT OF A SMALL-TOWN PARSON

Henry H. Hoffstretter

THE VOICE-TEACHING RACKET

R. G. McDodd

NOTES ON HUMAN FERTILITY

W. W. Bauer, M.D.



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» For the past several years we have made every effort to maintain the price of 25 cents for THE AMERICAN MERCURY. Now we are forced to change our price to 35 cents a copy, \$4 a year.

» We are making the change most reluctantly, and we are doing so only because of the great increase in production costs. Paper alone has more than doubled in the past few years, and the general expense of printing, binding and handling the magazine has gone up almost as much.

» Many other magazines have transferred at least part of the greater cost to their readers; we have been absorbing it as long as we possibly could. We can do it no longer.

» This January issue, which marks the beginning of the twenty-sixth year of continuous publication of THE AMERICAN MERCURY, appears in a somewhat new dress, which, we believe, will find favor in the eyes of our readers.

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The American Mercury

with which is combined the magazine, COMMON SENSE

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Daniel Seligman, *Assistant Editor*; Martha Rountree, *Reading Editor*

Joseph W. Ferman, *General Manager*

MEET THE PRESS

was selected for the Radio Honor Roll by the New York *Times*. Jack Gould, radio editor of the *Times*, in making the award wrote:

“‘Meet the Press’ again was outstanding in its class. In employing trained newspapermen to question public figures on the issues of the day, it brings out a maximum of straightforward information and a minimum of confusion and emotion, something which cannot be said for many of the other discussion shows.”

This adds one more honor to the growing list of awards won by this outstanding radio presentation.

MEET THE PRESS

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**MARCH
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JANUARY 14-31



THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFANTILE PARALYSIS
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, FOUNDER

THE CHECK LIST

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

THE STRUGGLE BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN, by Ferenc Nagy. \$6.00. *Macmillan*. This badly misnamed volume — actually it is concerned only with Hungary — should prove a useful source book for scholars for many years. It is partly an autobiography, recounting the efforts of the author and Zoltan Tildy to form the Smallholder's party and bring some semblance of democracy to Admiral Horthy's Hungary. But mostly it is a blow-by-blow account of the Communists' rise to total power in the country after the war. The author, who was Prime Minister at the time the Communists took over, describes at length their use of violence, fraud and even anti-Semitism to weaken the democratic parties and justify their own *coup d'état*. As the principal victim of this chicanery, Mr. Nagy was in a position to report in great detail on the methods used by Matyas Rákosi and the Soviet authorities, and he has done his material justice.

THE RAPE OF POLAND, *Pattern of Soviet Aggression*, by Stanislaw Mikolajczyk. \$4.00. *Whitelsey House*. The now-familiar story of Poland's betrayal by her wartime allies. Except for some autobiographical material, there is virtually nothing in this book that has not been told before. The reader does, however, get some inkling of what the Soviet conquest means to a Polish patriot who has spent the better part of his life fighting for national freedom and democracy. Although Mr. Mikolajczyk has made an effort to be calm and dispassionate in his discussions of Roosevelt and Churchill, it is obvious that he regards both of them as weaklings and double-dealers who could have saved Poland if they had been willing to stand up to Stalin.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

THE WHOLE OF THEIR LIVES, by Benjamin Gitlow. \$3.50. *Scribners*. This is an

intimate history of American Communism, written by a former General Secretary of the U. S. Party who was expelled in 1929 for his refusal to kowtow to Stalin. Like the author's previously published autobiography, *I Confess* (1939), this work makes it obvious that he has been maintaining some sort of indirect contacts in the Party, or at least that he has been able to interrogate certain Communists who have resigned in recent years. In any case, this volume is a mine of information. Its descriptions of the "romantic" period, when American Communism was dominated by John Reed and Louis C. Fraina, of any number of factional fights in the Party and the Comintern, and of the murders of Leon Trotsky, Carlo Tresca and Juliet Stuart Poyntz are all fascinating and plausible. An important book.

SEPARATE CHURCH AND STATE NOW, by Joseph Martin Dawson. \$2.50. *Richard R. Smith*. Most *MERCURY* readers will probably allow that Dr. Dawson, a prominent Baptist spokesman, is on the side of the angels in this defense of the traditional liberal position on the separation of church and state. Unfortunately, however, the issues have been sadly muddled in places throughout the book, especially where its author feels compelled to drag in the subject of Communism. Dr. Dawson denies that Soviet Russia is totalitarian, argues that freedom of religion is on the increase in that country, and sets some new kind of low for anti-Catholic hysteria when he presents Soviet-American ill will as something that has been largely engineered by the Vatican.

BIOGRAPHY

LITTLE ANNIE OAKLEY AND OTHER RUGGED PEOPLE, by Stewart H. Holbrook. \$3.50. *Macmillan*. A superb collection of Americana pieces by a man who can probably do them better than anybody else in America. There are excellent chapters on "Little Annie Oakley," "Murder at Harvard," "Ethan Allen, Author," "The Bank the James Boys Didn't Rob," "A Salute to Buffalo Bill," "Boston's Scollay Square,"

(Continued on page 117)

The American Mercury for February

will contain, among other things

COMMON SENSE IN LAW, by William A. Stern, II. *Law, says Mr. Stern, is far from being aloof from the realities of life, as some people imagine. Actually, it appears, law is even more sensitive to public opinion than it is eager to follow precedents, however "binding" they may be. An article with profound implications.*

WHEN MISS WAS MRS., AND VICE VERSA, by Doris E. Fleischman (Bernays). *A very amusing and also enlightening article on the trials and tribulations of a formerly militant Lucy Stoner — with a moral for women who still would like to be known as Miss regardless of marital status.*

PUERTO RICO, by Alida Malkus. *The sixteenth in the series of profiles of the states of the Federal Union and its possessions. Objective, analytical, informative.*

NEW HOPE FOR ANEMICS, by Milton L. Zisowitz and Eleanor Bennett. *An authoritative and comprehensive review of the anemia problem in medicine plus a report upon the latest very hopeful findings for its treatment.*

HOW FIREBUGS ARE CAUGHT, by Joseph Fulling Fishman. *A fascinating series of cases of pyromaniacs and swindlers who try to gouge insurance companies — by a man who has made a thorough study of the field.*

In addition there will be the usual departments: The Theatre, The Skeptics' Corner, The Library, The Soap Box, Down to Earth, The Open Forum, and The Check List.

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The American Mercury

MARY MARGARET McBRIDE

BY

ALLEN CHURCHILL

THE most publicized neuroses in the world undoubtedly belong to an ample, middle-aged lady named Mary Margaret McBride, who in days before radio might have lived a life of obscure inhibition. Thanks to a unique merger of Marconi and Freud, however, she is today prosperous and dearly beloved of some 6 million American women, all of whom fondly refer to her as Mary Margaret. This is because Miss McBride, one of the few people ever assisted along the road to success by feelings of insecurity and guilt, uses radio as a confessional. Nothing confessed by her has ever been remotely shocking, but it has bothered her nonetheless — and

in this she apparently is similar to most of the women in the United States. "Every 24 hours bring me new feelings of guilt," she explains. "There is only one way I can throw them off — tell about them over the air. I tell my listeners all about them. Then they write back and tell me not to worry, they have the same feelings themselves."

Several months ago, facing her television debut, Mary Margaret agitated the airwaves with confessions of insecurity. "I'm the prize sap of the universe," she humbly informed her audience. "You know, I'm the sort who will say Yes to anything, just anything, provided it's a long way

ALLEN CHURCHILL, whose profile of "Ross of the New Yorker" appeared in the MERCURY last August, is now devoting most of his time to free-lance writing. He has been managing editor of several publications, including the MERCURY, and he also worked on Yank.

off. Then when the time comes I'm terrified." Pausing for a breathless second, she went on in little-girl accents of despair: "Look at me now, sitting here just terrified by television. Terrified by television, that's alliteration but it's what I am. I don't even think I'll be able to finish this program, the way I feel. I know I'm just going to die. And all because I'll agree to anything, just so long as it's far, far off."

Chiefly because she so willingly tells all, her hold over her public amounts practically to mass mesmerism, and enables her to perform feats of persuasion unequalled outside the Bible. A measure of her ever-increasing hold on the housewives of America is Mary Margaret's anniversary celebrations. Her first five years in radio were marked by emotional ceremonies which packed the commodious Grand Central Palace in New York. Her tenth anniversary was held in the vastly larger Madison Square Garden, into which 20,000 of her followers crowded after 125,000 had requested tickets. Where her fifteenth anniversary, in 1949, will be held is a question currently perplexing her staff.

Mary Margaret's millions of admirers not only clamor to honor her but, more important, religiously buy the products she recommends. "The most outstanding example of reliance on the word of a human being in the commercial field," the magazine *Printer's Ink* once wrote. "She can sell anything from hairpins to refriger-

ators," a *Variety* review raved. "In my twenty years' experience as president of an advertising agency, I know of no sponsored program that can accomplish such amazing results," a grateful executive said.

The means by which Mary Margaret, who has a midwest accent and often sounds like a lisping tot, achieves such results are all her own. In the midst of interviewing one of her program guests, she may suddenly exclaim, "I just love Henry Sell," thus launching a commercial for Sell's Liver Pate and Corned Beef Loaf. "I really don't even have to talk about Henry's products," she continues intimately, "I just have to tell you what a wonderful person he is, and you will buy his products because you realize he would only be connected with something fine."

For the privilege of having Mary Margaret deliver such naïve blurbs for their products, sixteen carefully chosen radio sponsors each pay \$175 a week — and consider themselves fortunate to do so. Reasons for their pleasure are not hard to find. When a chain-store sponsor asked Mary Margaret to stress a new shipment of carrots, she did it so effectively that eight carloads were sold by nightfall. The sponsor of noodle soup, after checking, reported that in one community alone her words were responsible for 13,000 purchases. Her oldest sponsor claims that she alone pulled him out of the red, increasing his business 29 per cent. The sponsor of a pressure cooker which recently made the pro-

gram received letters from women who had owned other pressure cookers but thrown them out. "I couldn't believe my eyes," he says. "The letters said they had to have my pressure cooker because they knew dear Mary Margaret would only recommend the best."

II

The secret of Mary Margaret's success as a huckster is a matter for psychologists to illuminate. Photographs make her seem a cheerful, buoyant extrovert who might achieve results by sheer force of personality. But Mary Margaret is not like that, except physically. In appearance she rises solidly from tiny feet, her square body ending in broad, slightly hunched shoulders. A friendly, pink-and-white face is dominated by unusually large, penetrating eyes. Above it a square, graying pompadour replaces the mannish haircut of other years. But though fully as heavy as she looks in pictures, Mary Margaret is not a forceful personality. Lady-like and unspectacular, she undoubtedly possesses much quiet energy, but she has not achieved success because of it alone.

Rather, in addition to her confessions, Mary Margaret may hold her audience and sell her products because she has a mind that is perpetually interested. She finds fascinating — or professes to find fascinating — everything in this great big wonderful world, and over the air she is able to communicate this fascination to mil-

lions of women whose lives are otherwise drab. Where others in radio are content to read commercials prepared in advertising agencies, Mary Margaret is interested enough in her own products to investigate them as thoroughly as a newspaper reporter. Nothing about a product is too trivial for Mary Margaret to ferret out and pass along to her listeners, coated with the joy of discovery.

By her combination of interest, telling-ail, and cozy delivery, Mary Margaret can make almost anyone forget a commercial is a commercial. Recently Ted Bates, head of the agency handling Nescafé, sat in on a McBride broadcast. One of the day's guests had been in a prison camp. Had he, Mary Margaret asked suddenly, ever found Mr. Bates' product in any packages from America? He had. Mary Margaret then drew out his rapture at thus drinking Nescafé, and did it so skilfully that the hard-boiled Mr. Bates burst into tears.

Mary Margaret is also treasured by listeners because she is so utterly human. "I know I shouldn't tell you this," she begins coyly, and then describes a session with a male masseur — "a very interesting experience all around," she concludes. "People tell me I know my business," she sighs, "but honestly, I am never, never sure of myself." Once she nearly wept describing a telephone conversation in which her mother asked if she could smell some flowers. "Mother's feeling that wires could carry the scent of flowers as well as her voice

brought her so close to me that I know you would all want to hear about it," she gulped.

Mary Margaret's commercials consume only about fifteen minutes of an hour program. The rest of the time she devotes to interviewing one of several guests, or to dispensing her own thoughts. On her guests Mary Margaret's dotting interest acts like tonic. Hovering over them at a long table lined with microphones, she could be a small town mother fussing over her family's Sunday dinner table, inducing in those around her feelings of well-fed expansiveness. "It's the damndest thing the way she makes people *give*," a studio official muttered after hearing her lead Sally Rand through a touching account of an Ozark childhood. Mary Margaret's seemingly aimless technique is really a rich mixture of experience and skill. "You have to be a professional to realize the terrific genius behind that careless informality," a rival once said. Bennett Cerf, after appearing on her program, summed up her technique by saying, "Mary Margaret's thoughts are as vague as a pay-off punch by Joe Louis."

Mary Margaret's all-time favorite guests are Mrs. Roosevelt, who appears once a year, and the late Fiorello LaGuardia. She works endlessly to find the right people for her broadcasts, but once she has decided on the right person, she usually gets her man. After his triumphant return from Europe, General Omar Bradley rejected other offers for radio appear-

ances but accepted with alacrity when Mary Margaret reached him. His reply, on that occasion, sums up the married man's reaction to her program. "Maybe," the general said plaintively, "my wife will appreciate me at last."

III

Mary Margaret McBride was born in a Paris, Missouri, farmhouse on November 22, 1899. Her family was poor but her childhood, as she looks back, was a succession of happy meals. "I was always far more interested in food than in boys," she confesses, and colors her broadcasts with recollections of times when "Mother buttered our biscuits while they were hot and the rich yellow drippings ran down the plate to mix with the red ham gravy in which we later dipped our bread." Early in life she discovered an ambition besides eating. "From the time she was a small red-cheeked five-year-old mouthing her reading lessons in a one-room county schoolhouse," she states, "Mary Margaret McBride wanted to be a writer."

At Missouri State University she began by working after hours on the local paper. In her final year she was sent to cover a convention of religious leaders, and, like a good Baptist, overlooked in her stories the fact that the religious gentlemen bickered. This recommended her to the head of the Interchurch World Movement, who offered her a job in New York. After graduation, Mary Margaret accepted and established herself in

Greenwich Village. At the Inter-church office her desk was beside that of a brisk, sharp-eyed Southern girl named Estella Karn. Today Miss Karn, known to the radio faithful as Stella, is Mary Margaret's manager, sharing more than anyone else her goldfish-bowl existence.

For a girl as ambitious as Mary Margaret, a religious organization soon became tame. In a few months she set about finding a newspaper job. "Just let me cover a fire," she begged the editor of an afternoon newspaper. Finally permitted to do this, she wrote a colorful account and was hired. Magazines were the next world she determined to conquer. By the late 1920s her name was appearing in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and in the next five years she became one of the nation's highest-priced article writers. This temporarily proved her undoing, for with the coming of the depression magazines refused to pay her rates. After working furiously for fifteen years she found herself, at 34, idle and broke. "The mental horrors of the months that followed as nerves took revenge," she recalls, "have made me almost morbidly sympathetic with women who have mental burdens to bear."

But Mary Margaret didn't give up. "It is my firm but platitudinous belief," she later wrote, "that if in dour times one somehow manages to keep a stiff upper lip and actively struggle in whatever direction seems possible at the time, something will always

happen. You may not get what you go after but you get something, often something better."

Today, when women's programs glut the air, it is difficult to believe that in 1934, when Mary Margaret's agent steered her to a mass audition at WOR, there were no such programs. The one visualized by WOR, conducted by a lone woman, was a daring experiment. No one knew what to do on such a program, or what to expect. Mary Margaret now believes she got the job because she was the only applicant too frightened to demand a large salary.

As Martha Deane, a name created to hide her identity, Mary Margaret took to the air for half an hour daily. At first a jittery studio decreed that Martha should be a Mrs. Dooley-ish character, a grandmother who delivered salty advice, household hints, and the bright doings of grandchildren. Mary Margaret valiantly faked this for several weeks, coming to the end of her tether in the middle of a broadcast.

"Look here," she suddenly blurted out, "I haven't any children and I haven't any grandchildren. I'm not even married. If you will just excuse me, from now on I'll just tell you about myself—the places I've been and the people I meet." As this program ended officials converged to fire her, but one suggested waiting for audience reaction. It was a wise move. In succeeding days the studio was inundated with letters approving the new Martha Deane. Many of the let-

ters came — as they still do — from husbands, who thanked her for giving their wives something to talk about at dinner.

IV

After Labor Day last year the 6 million housewives who constitute her 1 P.M. NBC audience heard her confess some big news. Henceforth, she said happily, her afternoon program would run an hour instead of its traditional 45 minutes. Then, without pausing, she went on to even bigger news. On Tuesday nights she would also have her own personal television program.

From the mail which followed, Mary Margaret knew that the last announcement had hit a particularly happy spot. Television, her devoted fans told her, would not only permit them to watch Mary Margaret in action, but would answer another dream of long standing. It would allow husbands, after all these years, to know her, too.

By adding this extra time Mary Margaret herself gained eight new sponsors — three on radio and five on television — who brought her an additional \$3000 a week. Her listeners know this will not make Mary Margaret rich, however. Already, from her radio show, she earns the considerable sum of \$2800 weekly. Out of it she pays a staff of twelve, including Stella and Vincent Connolly, the announcer who adroitly handles her unexpected remarks. Television, where rates are high, will bring in much

more money, but it will add greatly to Mary Margaret's financial responsibilities.

It will also require her to work hard on the diet she has been following for several years, for television is unfair to fat people. Now her one large meal of the day is dinner, which she takes at home. Her dinner is often compounded of sponsors' products, and is a far cry from her oft-described favorite meal, "fixed the way Mother did it: delicate buttermilk biscuits, so hot you can't pick them up, with butter slathered on their delicate insides; mashed potatoes that have been hand-beaten with cream and butter until they are fluffier than clouds; baby chicken fried to crisp brownness; and, to finish off with, hot apple dumplings, rich with cinnamon, butter and brown sugar, and thick yellow cream to pour over them."

Friends of Mary Margaret complain that she devotes more time to her listeners than to the people she really knows. This is true. She seems perfectly content to sleep only five hours a night and to give nearly every waking moment to work — broadcasting, reading three or four books a day, answering hundreds of letters. No longer a Villager, she lives in a duplex apartment overlooking New York's Central Park. There she awakes every morning at eight and, in bed, begins listening to the many radio programs that have sprung up in the wake of hers. For two hours, without eating, she listens. Any guests slated for her program who

appear on others are swiftly dropped from her schedule.

At ten her cook arrives to prepare a breakfast of tea, bacon and dry toast, which Mary Margaret eats on a tray in the living room while still scouting other programs. At eleven she begins reading mail, dictating, answering phone calls, and studying the biographical information on the day's guests, which is prepared by her staff. At twelve she bathes and dresses and at 12:30 she steps into the taxi that takes her to Radio City. Usually waiting for her at this time is one of several taxi drivers whose wives have told them to call for Mary Margaret.

At the studio she stations herself, in the manner of her Baptist-preacher grandfather, outside the studio door to greet the audience of the day. Chiefly women from out of town who have written ahead for tickets, they often grasp her hand and look enraptured. "I love you, Mary Margaret," they whisper reverently. Occasionally women are surprised at her appearance. After years of listening to her schoolgirl tones, they are stunned to find a bulky, gray-haired woman. "Why, Mary Margaret," one lady demanded. "Where are your pig-tails?"

In dress Mary Margaret and Stella, both of whom have figures that defy fashion, express themselves in modish hats designed by their friend Juliette Nicole. Madame Nicole, as one of their happy family, makes hats and dresses for some sponsors' wives.

"Hurry up and sell lots of our product," one wife wrote, "so we can afford to have Nikki design Betty Jane's new party dress." When Mary Margaret, who shares mail with her listeners, read this over the air, her voice took on a quiet confidence. "I just know," she said, "that you are all going to buy this delicious salad oil so that Betty Jane can have that wonderful, wonderful new dress."

During the interview parts of her broadcast Mary Margaret hunches forward on her elbows, hands clenched into tight fists, feet hooked around the legs of her chair. Sitting tensely, eyes fixed full on her guest's face, she asks her leading questions. For commercials, she unclenches her hands and gestures, as if this helped to generate enthusiasm. "Hartley's heavenly jam," she burbles happily, "Why, the strawberry is completely out of this world. I want you all to write me just how good it is—and I'll tell you something else. It's especially good when spread on Enriched Tip Top Bread. Don't just spread it on, slather it on. Then eat it. Ummmm." Having worked two sponsors into one homey commercial, and worked up an appetite in her listeners, she adjusts her glasses, clenches her fists, and turns back to her guest.

At the end of each program she again stands outside bidding farewell to the audience. Then she and Stella Karn, sometimes arguing heatedly, go downstairs for the cup of tea that is Mary Margaret's current lunch. If nothing special has been arranged she

then returns home to read and dictate. She prefers to remain there, attired comfortably in pajamas, until time for her next broadcast, but often she must scout guests at dinners and parties. Those who accuse her of insincerity watch closely at these functions to see whether her interest in people extends to everyone, or merely to potential program guests. The question has never been satisfactorily answered, for with uncanny accuracy Mary Margaret seems able to spot the most interesting person at any gathering, and the others present promptly gather around them.

After dinners and parties Mary Margaret again goes home — not to rest but to work. She goes straight to the bedroom decorated by samplers sent her by devoted listeners. Above her head hangs the favorite, which says, "All That I Am or Hope To Be, I Owe To My Angel Mother." Propped beneath this she reads more new books in search of possible guests for her program. Some time between

2 and 3 A.M. she turns out the light.

Inevitably, Mary Margaret encounters an occasional guest who is antagonized rather than charmed by her naïveté. One such was a wartime correspondent just back from the South Pacific. "They sat me down opposite her," he recalls, "and she began talking this trivia — where she had been the night before, what she had thought, a recipe she'd heard. After the fighting I'd left, I couldn't take it. I was rude to her."

The episode did not end there. After bidding Mary Margaret a cold farewell, the correspondent started for the elevator. Immediately he was surrounded by members of the studio audience. "How dare you be so nasty to our dear Mary Margaret," they demanded severely, and followed him down the hall angrily.

"I guess Mary Margaret won our battle of wills," the correspondent now admits ruefully. "Those women made me feel like a heel — and I've felt like a heel about it ever since."

THE WHITE GIFT

BY ETHEL ROMIG FULLER

As April petaling a bough
Is proof without a spoken vow
Of fulfillment to the root,
So I stand before you mute —
How clumsy-trite, any word
For a heart thus wonder-stirred:
The white gift of myself insures
Fruition of my love on yours.

SENATOR HUMPHREY MEETS THE PRESS

The new Congress contains many new personalities. Among them is Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, Jr., former Mayor of Minneapolis, who defeated Senator Ball last November 2. Because of Senator Humphrey's position as a founder of the ADA wing of the Democratic party, and as one of the most outspoken of the younger figures in the leadership of the Democratic party, his views have special importance as indicating, in large part, the philosophy and strategy of a dominant faction in the present Senate and House of Representatives. He made public the general direction of his thinking at a recent broadcast of Meet the Press, presented each Friday by the Mutual Broadcasting System in cooperation with the editors of THE AMERICAN MERCURY. The transcript of the broadcast, slightly cut, is herewith published in the conviction that it has importance for the American people. The participants in the broadcast, aside from Senator-elect Humphrey, included May Craig of the Portland (Me.) Express, Kenneth Crauford of Newsweek, Phelps Adams of the New York Sun, and J. R. Wiggins of the Washington Post. The press conference was presided over by Laurence E. Spivak, editor of THE AMERICAN MERCURY.

SPIVAK: Welcome everybody to another weekly newsconference. During the next thirty minutes, the press will fire questions at Hubert H. Humphrey, Jr., the new United States Senator from Minnesota. His defeat of Joseph Ball was described by the *Nation* as "a one-man miracle, wrought in defiance of all the political laws and probabilities." Hubert Humphrey, at the age of 37, will be one of the youngest members of the United States Senate. He was elected Mayor of Minneapolis for the first time in 1945 by the largest plurality in that city's history. He was re-

elected in 1947 by an even larger vote. He won national prominence at the Democratic National Convention this summer when he sponsored and pushed through the controversial civil rights plank, which led to the formation of the Dixiecrat party. A Vice-Chairman of the Americans for Democratic Action, he ran for the Senate under the banner of independent progressives, rather than as a Truman Democrat. . . . And now we'll start the questions. Are you ready, Senator?

HUMPHREY: I should say I am.

SPIVAK: Mr. Adams, you have the first question.

ADAMS: Senator Humphrey, did you favor President Truman's renomination before the convention at Philadelphia?

HUMPHREY: I was pledged to one of those programs known as the "open convention."

ADAMS: Was that because you didn't think President Truman could win, or because you didn't think he was a good President?

HUMPHREY: No, I felt it was important for the Democratic party to prove to the American people that no one person had a monopoly upon the nomination. It was my considered judgment that it would be good for the party to have some contest at the convention. I might say that I had supported President Truman at two state conventions. I spoke at the Wisconsin state convention of the Democratic party and urged the renomination of President Truman. I also defended the President at our own state convention here in Minnesota.

ADAMS: But you did work for an uninstructed delegation from your state, did you not, sir?

HUMPHREY: I worked for an uninstructed delegation.

ADAMS: Did you think that President Truman was going to win the election?

HUMPHREY: Did I think he was going to win the election?

ADAMS: Yes, come on, come now —

HUMPHREY: Very frankly, I felt that it would take a miracle, and he produced a miracle.

CRAIG: Senator, if you don't mind my calling you Senator, don't you think that Truman promised more than he can do?

HUMPHREY: After watching President Truman win this election almost single-handedly, I don't think any American can say that he's promised more than he can do. He already has delivered more than anybody else thought he could.

CRAIG: I don't know that he has delivered anything yet. He hasn't had a chance with the Republican Congress, and even with this Congress he's got a lot of opposition, reactionary Republicans and reactionary Democrats.

HUMPHREY: I — I think he can make good on a great deal of his program. He was surely very explicit in what he believed in. And may I say that I think a large number of Congressmen and Senators were elected simply because of the definiteness of his program. And I would like to correct one mis-statement here, Mr. Spivak. Hubert Humphrey did not run as an independent progressive. Hubert Humphrey ran as a Democrat and Hubert Humphrey campaigned up and down the state of Minnesota for Harry S. Truman for President and he never pulled any punches. He made over — about 675 speeches in behalf of the President.

WIGGINS: Senator, you were Vice-Chairman of the Americans for Democratic Action, were you not?

HUMPHREY: That's right.

WIGGINS: And do you recall an ADA pamphlet which stated that Truman had not won the minds and hearts of the people, and declaring that this grave moment needed a new face, and victory could be won by Eisenhower and/or Douglas?

HUMPHREY: Yes I do, sir.

WIGGINS: Do you still think that you and the rest of the ADA were right in wishing to ditch Harry Truman?

HUMPHREY: I think we were dead wrong. And I think confession is good for the soul.

WIGGINS: I think that's magnificent.

CRAWFORD: Senator, what do you regard as the principal issue, the decisive issue in your campaign against Senator Ball?

HUMPHREY: Well, I don't know if there was any one decisive issue. There was a definite conflict of political philosophy. I campaigned on the basis of the New Deal program and the program of President Truman. I would say that there was one, or possibly two, decisive issues. One was on the matter of labor legislation and the other, I would say, was on foreign policy. I surely disagreed with the Senator on foreign policy and made no bones about so stating.

CRAWFORD: One more question, Senator. You're best known since the convention, I think, as the man who pushed through the civil rights plank that pushed the Dixiecrats overboard.

HUMPHREY: That's right.

CRAWFORD: How do you expect to

follow up on that? What sort of program do you envisage?

HUMPHREY: Well, I would like to say that my position on civil rights was one in support of the President. I thought that was one of the most magnificent parts of President Truman's program as he filled out the term of President Roosevelt.

CRAWFORD: What I mean is, do you expect to get through this next Congress an anti-lynching bill, for example?

HUMPHREY: I surely think we can. The President is the leader of our party, and he recommended that program. I think he'll recommend it to the Congress and I will support him.

CRAWFORD: In other words, you'll just let the Dixiecrats go. The Democratic party, having got along without them in this election, will continue to get along without them?

HUMPHREY: Well, I wouldn't want to be that abrupt with the Dixiecrats. May I say that I think the President is not obligated to anyone. He had the real opposition of the Dixiecrats. Frankly, I hope that some of them will come back to support some of these programs. And from what I know, I think that there are certain basic programs that they will support.

SPIVAK: Mr. Humphrey, what do you personally plan to do as far as the national FEPC, for example, goes? Are you going to try to put legislation through Congress on that?

HUMPHREY: May I just say that I recognize that I am a newcomer to the Senate of the United States. I'm the junior Senator from Minnesota, and I have an awful lot to learn and I know it. I'm going to look forward to the opportunity of becoming much more informed on many national issues, and I'm going to be a cooperative member of the United States Senate. I'm going to support President Truman and his program. If he asks — and I think he will; he didn't mince any words about it — for a program on civil rights, I'm going to support that. I'm surely not foolish enough, may I say, to think that some young fellow from out here in Minnesota is going to come down and upset the Congress of the United States.

SPIVAK: In short, if he lets the civil rights program drop, you're going to let it drop along with him?

HUMPHREY: Oh no, I wouldn't say that. I don't think the President is going to let the civil rights program drop, and we're not going to let it drop.

ADAMS: I gather then, Senator, that you don't expect to introduce this civil rights legislation in Congress yourself?

HUMPHREY: I frankly haven't had much time to think about introducing any legislation into the Senate. I will surely cooperate with those that want to go along with such a program.

ADAMS: Well now, do you think this issue should be taken up among the

first items to come before the new Congress, or should it be left until later, in your opinion?

HUMPHREY: I think it — I don't know just what you mean by a first item. I hope that it will be taken up within the first year, yes.

ADAMS: Well, it's been complained that in the past the Republicans have left this 'til late in the session when a filibuster could lick it. Now, do you think it should be brought up early so that a filibuster can't beat it?

HUMPHREY: Yes. I think it should be. And I want to say to my Republican friends — because both parties endorse the civil rights program; that wasn't a controversial issue between the two political parties — that if both the Democratic members and the Republican members are sincere on civil rights, I don't think there are enough votes to stop its passage. I think this is one place where the bi-partisan policy might be extended to domestic affairs.

ADAMS: It isn't a question of bi-partisan policy, is it? It's a question of Southern Democrats who've always been able to lick it with a filibuster.

HUMPHREY: There are a sufficient number of Democrats and Republicans who are supposedly pledged to a civil rights program to stop any filibuster and it's just simply a matter of arithmetic.

ADAMS: One more question. If you cannot get cloture to stop a fili-

buster, do you think this program should be laid aside in favor of some other program, or is this the most important part of the President's program to you?

HUMPHREY: Oh, in other words you mean that the whole program of legislation should be stopped? Is that what you're referring to?

ADAMS: Yes, that's what I'm —

HUMPHREY: Well, of course not.

We've had — there are many issues that have to be worked on, and I'm convinced that the people that are vitally concerned with civil rights are equally concerned with a host of other Democratic issues. The housing program, the matter of inflation, and foreign policy. Those of us that are champions of civil rights, if we can call ourselves that, are not so, let me say, narrow-minded as to believe that there's but one issue and that the whole country must stop dead until that issue is worked out.

SPIVAK: Now are there any more questions on civil rights?

CRAWFORD: Senator, there's one more question in that connection. It has been suggested that the thing to do is amend the rules of the Senate quickly at this session to take care of the filibuster. Would you be in sympathy with that?

HUMPHREY: I would be in favor of that, yes. I think that's something that requires a little bit more thinking. I have been of the mind that we shouldn't stop the processes of American government by a few

willful men and I think there's much to be done. So that anything that can expedite the flow of government business ought to be undertaken.

CRAIG: Senator, I was interested in your saying that there might be a few fundamental points upon which you could meet with the Dixiecrats. What basis do you think you could meet them on?

HUMPHREY: How many Dixiecrats were there?

ADAMS: Four states, Senator.

HUMPHREY: That's right. That's eight Senators and — how many Congressmen?

ADAMS: They didn't run any Congressmen.

HUMPHREY: All right. Then do you think that four states should have the — should be given the privilege of stopping the entire flow of American progress? I don't think that the Congress is going to do that —

CRAIG: That wasn't the question. Senator, you made the statement you thought there was some basis upon which you could meet the Dixiecrats.

HUMPHREY: Why, I'm simply saying that there are people in the Southland — I've had the privilege of living there — that are concerned about the elimination of the poll tax, for example, and the security of person, which means Federal prosecution for any lynching. Those are two basic things that I think can be gotten through.

ADAMS: Isn't it true, Senator, that

there are over a hundred Southern Democrats in the House and that the majority of those — over eighty of them, in fact — are conservatives and might belong to the Dixiecrat school, so to speak.

HUMPHREY: I disagree when you say they're conservatives. As a matter of fact, I'm pretty proud of some of our Southern representatives. They helped initiate the New Deal program. They were a whole lot more liberal, may I say, than their Republican opposition.

ADAMS: Well, Senator —

HUMPHREY: They went along with housing programs, with rural electrification, with agricultural programs, with public health measures. Let's not have anybody try to brand our Southern friends as a group of conservatives. There may be some conservatives amongst them, but believe me, they are outnumbered and outmanned and, let me say, out-conservatized by some of their friends to the North.

ADAMS: Well, isn't it true that over eighty of them voted to pass the Taft-Hartley law, for example, over President Truman's veto?

HUMPHREY: That's very right.

ADAMS: Well, that's conservative, isn't it?

HUMPHREY: That's — on that issue, yes. But not on all issues. Let's not brand a man a complete conservative just on the basis of one issue. And may I say that sometimes people change their minds.

WIGGINS: Senator, the Democratic

party emerged from this election as a party of the center. The Democratic party sheared off its extreme right and its extreme left.

HUMPHREY: Yes sir.

WIGGINS: Do you think that a party confined within that middle range can go ahead to continued victory in the American political field, and that no compromise with either the extreme left or the right is necessary.

HUMPHREY: I surely do, Mr. Wiggins. As a matter of fact, I think that's one of the great accomplishments of this election. I think it's one of the — it's a real tribute to President Truman that, with the opposition on the extreme left and the opposition on the extreme right, he was able to go through to victory.

CRAIG: Senator, we've dealt rather at length with the right-wing Dixiecrats. What would you do legislatively to curb Communism?

HUMPHREY: Frankly, I think the best way to curb Communists is by the kind of an election we had on November 2. They got about as many votes here as — well, they got so few votes, let me say, that they're surely not a menace in this country. Dynamic democracy and a hard-hitting political program, such as we had in the Democratic platform, are the answers.

CRAIG: Did I understand you to say that Communists in this country are not a menace?

HUMPHREY: I said this election has surely proven that they are not a

menace in this country at this time.

CRAIG: You think they're only a "red herring?"

HUMPHREY: Oh no. I don't think they're a "red herring." We dealt with them in Minnesota and we didn't deal with them lightly. We booted them right out of a political party and told them to get their own. And when they get into their own party we know who they are, and what they are, and they can't hide behind the mask of respectability.

SPIVAK: Senator, what happens to them when they get into somebody else's party?

HUMPHREY: When they get into somebody else's party? Boot them out again!

CRAWFORD: Senator, I'd like to break over into foreign affairs for a minute. You come from what we've considered an isolationist part of the country. You're a non-isolationist certainly. I'd like to ask you specifically how you feel about the two things that seem to be in the offing concerning foreign affairs. The proposal of a Western European alliance, for example, and the rearming of Western Europe.

HUMPHREY: First of all, I would say that as far as the Western Europe alliance is concerned, I would support it.

CRAWFORD: With us, more or less, guaranteeing it?

HUMPHREY: Yes sir.

CRAWFORD: And on rearmament?

HUMPHREY: I'd have to know what the facts are about that.

SPIVAK: Senator, are you for the re-establishment of an OPA?

HUMPHREY: I am not.

SPIVAK: Well, are you for re-establishing any price control?

HUMPHREY: I am. I support the President's anti-inflation program. It's in the Democratic party platform.

SPIVAK: That was fairly general, wasn't it, Senator?

HUMPHREY: As far as prices were concerned, it asked selective price control where items were in short supply and strong demand, and where there was exorbitant profiteering. It also asked for some government allocation of critically needed materials. It included what we already have now: a Consumer Credit Control and the raising of the credit reserve requirements of the Federal Reserve Board.

SPIVAK: Well, where you froze prices and had some price control would you also freeze wages? Or would you let wages alone in those industries?

HUMPHREY: I would wait to see whether or not the — whether or not the wage structure compensated for the cost of living, and, after there was some agreement there, or some meeting of the respective proportions, then there would be time to consider wage control. And believe me, right now wages are far below the rise in the cost of living. Until that's taken up there should be no wage control.

CRAIG: Senator, the President is in favor of universal military training. Do you favor that?

HUMPHREY: I have not supported it. I do support peacetime selective service. I have frankly not had enough information or evidence to prove the necessity of universal military training. By the way, there are a dozen proposals on UMT, and I think that these proposals have to be considered individually.

CRAIG: Will you follow the President?

HUMPHREY: Will I follow him?

CRAIG: In UMT proposals?

HUMPHREY: It depends on what kind of a proposal he offers.

ADAMS: Senator, I'd like to go to the Taft-Hartley law for a minute. I understand that you favor its outright repeal. Is that correct?

HUMPHREY: I support the Democratic platform, which calls for its repeal and the passage of whatever labor legislation may be necessary.

ADAMS: Does that mean, in your opinion, going back to the Wagner Act, exactly?

HUMPHREY: No, I think the Wagner Act is a premise or base from which we work. There may be a necessity for some changes in the Wagner Act.

ADAMS: Then when you say repeal you really mean amendment of the Taft-Hartley Act, don't you, sir?

HUMPHREY: Well, I think we ought to get the repeal out of the way, and then start going at the matter of

labor-management relationships in a manner which gives some consideration to the problems that face labor and management.

ADAMS: I'd like to get some idea of your views on exactly what our labor legislation should be. Now do you think that union members have a right to know whether their officers are Communists or not?

HUMPHREY: Yes I do.

ADAMS: You wouldn't change that?

HUMPHREY: I wouldn't change it. I'd also say that as long as we're going into it, we might even — we might even put that in for industry; it would be a good idea.

ADAMS: Well, that's fair enough. Now what do you think — do you think the Federal government should have the right to delay strikes that threaten the national safety or the public health and welfare?

HUMPHREY: It depends on how you want to define the national safety. The people that believe in free enterprise the most apparently don't believe in it in labor-management relationships. I frankly feel that if we want a free economy we're going to have to be willing to take some of the risks that come along with freedom.

ADAMS: Then you don't think the government really should be able to step in and stop, or at least delay, one of these strikes?

HUMPHREY: Oh, I wouldn't be opposed to delay.

ADAMS: Well, that's all the Taft-Hartley law does, isn't it?

HUMPHREY: How far do you wish to extend it?

ADAMS: You're answering the questions. How far do *you* wish to extend it?

HUMPHREY: I have not had a chance to review all of that, sir.

ADAMS: How about jurisdictional strikes and secondary boycotts?

HUMPHREY: I think jurisdictional strikes are being worked out by a cooperative relationship in the labor movement itself; and the secondary boycott, as far as that's concerned, has been one of the weapons of the labor movement for years. And I think that any hasty legislation on that should be surely turned aside.

ADAMS: One final question, and I'll let you off the hook on this one.

HUMPHREY: Thank you.

ADAMS: You feel, of course, that every man should have the legal right to belong to a union if he wants to?

HUMPHREY: Yes sir.

ADAMS: Now, do you think that he also has the legal right not to belong to a union if he wants to?

HUMPHREY: Well, I believe in the union's security. I believe in the union shop. I don't believe in any free rides. These people that are in a union shop, where the majority of the membership in a democratic election vote for a union shop, should belong too. It ought to be a union shop.

WIGGINS: Do you believe in the closed shop?

HUMPHREY: I don't think the closed

shop is as important as the union shop, frankly. However, I think the record of labor-management relationships in this country indicates that the closed shop has done well.

CRAIG: Then, Senator, as I see it, you would repeal the Taft-Hartley Act and then re-enact some of it under a Democratic name?

HUMPHREY: No. I tell you what I think we ought to do. Repeal the Taft-Hartley Act, get back to the National Labor Relations Act, or the Wagner Act, and then let us call in the representatives of labor and the conscientious representatives of business. And I don't believe in having the corporation attorneys being the advisors to the committee.

CRAIG: Senator, there was one aspect of civil rights which we did not touch on, and that is the armed forces. Would you abolish segregation in the armed services by a statute or would you leave that to our military authorities?

HUMPHREY: Frankly, I would prefer that it be abolished by statute, because, after all, when men are taken into the armed service they're taken in by statute.

ADAMS: Senator, do you favor an increase in Federal taxes this year?

HUMPHREY: I surely favor a re-writing of the so-called Knutson Tax Bill. He won't be down there to help write it, by the way —

SPIVAK: I'm sorry to interrupt now, Senator Humphrey, but our time is up. Our thanks go to you.

SATURDAY NIGHT

A STORY

BY E. V. GRIFFITH

WE'D been cuttin' spruce pulp all day, an' by noon both of us were good an' pitchy. When it was gettin' dark we put our peelin'-spuds on a stump where we could find them easy, took our pickaroons an' Swede saws, an' headed up towards camp. The ground was soggy under our feet an' there was a lot of mosquitoes. We went up along an old skid-trail through where the high ground was cut off an' got t' the shack while it was still light enough t' see good. It got dark in the swamp before it did on high ground. That was when I was sixteen an' Shug twenty.

We were both pretty tired but we figured on goin' t' a dance at Hay-slip's Corner. That's about twenty-five miles south from where we were, but we had the Ford. They had some pretty good dances down there on Saturday nights.

We'd planned on goin' all week. We knew we'd have to drag the old man along with us, like we always did, but it wasn't so bad because he always ran into some of his cronies

down there an' they went off by themselves an' talked an' drank till he passed out. Then Shug an' I toted him outside an' put him in the car an' could horse around till we got around t' goin' home.

The old man always drank a lot, even when he was piece-cuttin', but usually he kept pretty sober on Saturdays so he could hang a good one on at night. But *this* time he took his bottle along to the woods an' started tankin' up first thing in the mornin'. It was some home-brew a guy he knew had cooked up an' given him. It was a helluva sight stronger than whisky, because Shug an' I tried it, but neither one of us could stomach it. It about made you gag just smellin' of it. The old man seemed t' be able t' go it pretty good, an' he had a whole gallon jug of it with him in the woods that day. He could hold his own with it, though, 'cause it took a lot of *any* kind of drink t' put him under. Stuff worked on him slow, whether it was beer or whisky or wine or slop like he was drinkin' now.

E. V. GRIFFITH is a young writer living in Minnesota who has studied under Robert Penn Warren. His poetry has appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature* and other magazines, and his first novel, *Men Threshing*, is due to be published some time this year.

He could still do a good day's work, an' it kept yuh jumpin' t' keep up with him. He'd been workin' in the woods ever since he was a kid, an' guys that knew him said that when he was younger they didn't come any better.

We worked pretty good about half the mornin', with Shug fallin', the old man loppin' an' sawin', an' me peelin'. We piled our stuff along a skid-road wherever there was one, an' where there wasn't we cut one. The guy we were workin' for did his checkin' in the woods, an' skidded his stuff out with a team an' dray when things had frozen up good. We had a pretty good stand of spruce an' it looked like we'd be able t' make ourselves a nice piece of jack. We got twenty cents a stick, peeled an' piled. The sticks were eight feet long an' anywheres from four inches on up on the little end. It was some of the best timber we'd had in a long time, in spite of the fact that there'd been a guy in there cuttin' before we were, an' he cut sort of piecemeal, a stick here an' a stick there. It was swampy ground, an' it looked like he'd gone around any place he thought he mighta got his feet wet. We cut clean as we went.

We were workin' like that, an' the old man kept drinkin'. Shug an' I didn't pay much attention to him because both of us were thinkin' about the dance an' the time we was gonna have. Neither of us were too fond of the old man, anyway. Most of our deals were just between the two

of us. The old man wasn't the kind of guy you could let in on things. Shug an' I usually did pretty much as we wanted, except when we had t' take the old man along or we couldn't get the car. We used to hash things over among ourselves an' just about always did the same thing.

Anyway, the old man had been hittin' his jug pretty regular, an' had chopped his axe into a spruce stump about a foot an' a half high, with one blade of it stickin' straight up. I don't know how it happened, but he was goin' toward it an' he tripped on a root or somethin', or stumbled because he was gettin' tipsy, an' fell right smack on the blade. It got him in the stomach, a little t' the left of center, toward his side, kinda, an' with it stickin' in the stump that way there wasn't nothin' t' give an' it cut right into him, right through his clothes an' into his guts. He stayed there humped over for a second, kinda surprised, the axe still in him, his hands clawin' the air on both sides of the stump, tryin' t' get his balance. Then he let a bellow outa him an' stood up an' threw his arms around his stomach an' hugged himself real tight, bendin' almost double.

He bled like a stuck hog. He was a little pale around the gills, but it didn't seem t' hurt him like you'd think somethin' like that would. Not actual *pain*. Not at first, anyway. He lifted his arms a little bit, still keepin' them around him, an' peeked in at it a second, like he couldn't believe it. The blood was gettin' the front of his

clothes all wet, an' he pulled out his shirt-tail an' stuck it over the cut, t' sop it up, kinda, an' high-tailed it for the shack. Shug an' I ran up after him, an' we made it in record time. All this time the old man was still bleedin', an' had lost a lot of blood, but not enough so it weakened or stopped him. He ran into the shack an' jerked his shirt open an' grabbed the flour-sack an' flopped down in a chair an' leaned back an' started puttin' handfuls of flour on the cut an' patten' it down. It didn't do any good for a few seconds, but then the flour made the blood kinda pasty, an' he kept puttin' more an' more of it into the open cut, an' finally it stopped the bleedin'. I felt kinda sick just watchin' him, but it didn't seem t' faze him. He'd been a little scared when it happened, because it surprised him, but now he wasn't scared any more an' was sure of himself. That's how he *always* was — sure of himself. But in a kinda mean, superior way. When he wanted yuh t' do somethin' he never asked yuh, he *told* yuh. He never explained why he did things, he just did 'em. One of those kinda guys that if they make a mistake will never admit it, but twist things so it's everybody else who's wrong an' they're right. I think if just once he woulda admitted he'd made a miscue, or said he was sorry or somethin' I coulda liked him a little. Just *once*, even. I don't think Shug woulda liked him no matter what. I don't even know what made us stay with him. Shug an' I coulda made out on our own just as well as

with the old man. *Better*, prob'ly, because Shug an' I got along good. We didn't give any more 'n we got. We all three chipped in even-steps for grub, an' all helped with the work, an' whatever was left that we made was ours. Of course it woulda been if we was by ourselves, too. Maybe it was just that even when he's mean like the old man was an' drinks a lot an' isn't much good, a kid still wants t' have a dad.

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The old man was leanin' back in the chair puttin' more flour on his cut an' it wasn't bleedin' at all now. Shug an' I just stood there, feelin' kinda uncomfortable because we couldn't *do* nothin'. Shug wanted him t' go t' town an' let a doc take a look at it but he said no damn sawbones was gonna go pawin' *him* over. Shug's got an awful temper an' he flew off the handle an' told him all right then, damn it, don't, an' went back t' the woods.

I cleaned up the blood an' stayed t' see if there was anythin' the old man wanted. His clothes were soaked up pretty bad an' he stripped off to put on some new ones. I got him a wet rag so he could wash the blood off. He always wore long underwear, even in summer. I don't see how he could stand 'em. Shug an' I never wore any at all.

When he was puttin' the new underwear on he moved a little too quick an' the cut started bleedin' again in one place, but it wasn't bad,

an' he slopped some more flour on it an' it stopped right away. He got a little blood on the side of his underwear, where the cut was, an' it made a wet, red stain, but it was the only clean pair he had so they had t' do. He put some new pants on, an' a shirt, but not his shoes, an' went over t' the bunk t' lay down. It was a double bunk an' he slept in the bottom half of it an' I slept over him. Shug's bunk was on the other side of the room. I was goin' t' help him but he said he'd learned to walk a damn good many years ago an' hadn't needed any help since, an' he guessed he could make it now. Real mean-like. Like I'd done somethin' wrong.

I went back t' the woods where Shug was an' took my peelin'-spud an' was strippin' the bark off a stick of spruce when Shug said, half t' himself, "Jesus, why did it have t' happen *today*?" I knew he was thinkin' about the dance. I didn't say anything, an' Shug fell another small tree an' started loppin' the limbs an' said he didn't give a damn, he was still goin'. I could see the old man's blood on the ground in one place an' was careful to step over it when I took my Swede-saw an' went over t' the spruce Shug was workin' on t' saw it up for peelin'.

We kept workin', an' at noon neither one of us was hungry, but I went up t' see how the old man was. Shug stayed in the woods an' kept right on cuttin'. The old man was asleep an' snorin' like he always did, an' there was a couple deer-flies matin'

on his forehead. I lugged him a pail of fresh water an' put it where he could get it easy an' headed back t' the swamp. I was gonna tell Shug about the flies, but he didn't seem in the mood for it, an' I didn't.

The two of us worked all afternoon, an' by night we musta cut an' peeled about a double cord an' a half. We were all pitchy an' sweaty an' felt dirty all over. Piece-cuttin' sure is dirty work.

We statched our spuds on a stump an' took our other stuff an' went up t' the shack. The old man's gallon of brew was right where he left it an' I took it up with me. It musta been goin' on seven o'clock an' was gettin' dark in the swamp, but it was still light up on high ground, where it'd been cut off an' there weren't any trees. Usually we didn't come up till it was so dark yuh couldn't see at all.

When we got t' the shack you could still see, though it wouldn't be much longer till yuh couldn't. Shug went in first an' put his stuff down. The old man was awake but Shug didn't say anythin'. I came in an' set the jug on a bench an' put my saw down by the door where Shug's was. The old man had got at another gallon of the brew an' been hittin' it pretty heavy. I don't think he shoulda been drinkin' when he was hurt like that, but it didn't do no good t' try t' tell him anythin'.

The old man asked what we were doin' up so early, an' Shug told him we were goin' t' Hayslip's. I guess the old man thought he was bein' smart

or somethin' because he got real mad an' said that by God there'd be no Hayslip's that night an' that we did altogether too much gallivantin' around an' could stay t' home for a change. Shug didn't say anythin', but took the kerosene jug an' went outside. We sloshed kerosene on our hands t' take the pitch off an' then went t' wash up. We used a lot of soap t' get the smell off.

The wash-dish was on a bench outside an' when I was soapin' I asked Shug what he thought we oughta do. He was wipin' his face, an' it was half hid in the towel. He'd been kinda mad all afternoon an' was worse now. He said he didn't know about me, but by God *he* was goin'. He said we couldn't help the old man any by stayin' home an' listenin' t' his belly-achin', an' I said I guessed so.

We went inside an' fixed some grub, an' ate, an' afterwards Shug dug out a pair of new levis he'd bought an' a white shirt an' slipped out of his pitchy pants an' started puttin' the new ones on. There was a pitch smudge on his thigh but he didn't wash it off. The old man watched him till he had them on an' was buttonin' up his shirt an' then he asked him, real sour-like, where in hell he thought he was goin'. Shug didn't answer him but told me to get a jump on if I figured on comin' along, because he was just about ready. He slicked his hair down with water an' knocked a wave into it with the side of his hand. Shug was pretty good lookin' when he was fixed up.

I started dressin', an' the old man bellowed out again, wantin' t' know just what in hell we were up to, an' Shug turned on him, mad as hell, an' said he'd told him once, that we were goin' t' the dance at Hayslip's. The old man was mad, too, an' yelled back at Shug, "Well, by God, I said you ain't." Shug was so mad now he was white, an' he came across the room where the old man was layin' on the bed an' collared him an' lifted him up an' shook him, sayin' that by God he was goin' t' do just about as he damned pleased. I thought there was goin' t' be trouble for sure, an' got ready t' help Shug if he needed it. Shug was bigger 'n the old man, but I didn't know if he could lick him. He an' the old man used to argue a lot, an' get mad, but this was the first time they ever come close t' really fightin'. When we was kids he used t' lick us a lot but he knew better than t' try it now because both of us were built pretty good an' could take care of ourselves in a scrap.

Anyway, Shug was shakin' him like that, an' they were both so mad they couldn't see straight. I thought the old man was goin' t' hit him or somethin', but he didn't. If he hadn't been hurt an' about half drunk he probably woulda. His mouth was real tight an' his face dark an' like he had a bitch with the whole world. He didn't do anythin', though, an' Shug threw him down an' went outside, snarlin' at me t' get the god-damned lead out.

Some mosquitoes was gettin' in through the open door an' I went out-

ide an' closed it after me. Shug was n the Ford already, an' still mad as hell. He's sure got a temper on him, in' it don't pay t' horse around with him when he's mad, either. You don't wanna go near him no more 'n a lit stick of dynamite. He's as apt t' clip yuh as not.

Well, we started, an' Shug sorta cooled off after a while, an' by the time we'd gone twelve or thirteen miles he was pretty much himself again. One good thing about when Shug gets mad, it doesn't last long, but he sure gets burned up while it does. Usually even the old man steers clear when he blows up.

III

It musta been about eight-thirty when we got t' Hayslip's, an' things were just gettin' goin' good. We found a place t' park, an' went inside, tryin' t' look casual.

Hayslip's ain't much of a place to look at, but a guy can have a helluva lot of fun. There's kind of a store in one half of the buildin', but that's closed on dance nights. The place where you dance ain't very big an' the floor's kinda rough. There's a bar along the left side of it an' seven or eight booths along the right, an' you dance in between. Only there's uprights in between the bar an' the booths, an' you have to dance around them an' that ain't none too easy when you're about half crocked. They have kind of an orchestra with three or four guys playin' in it an' they make pretty good music. Hay-

slip's is a place t' meet guys. Pretty near everybody shows up there on Saturdays an' the chances of runnin' into just about anybody you want t' see are pretty good.

Shug an' I stood over against the wall, kinda lookin' things over. A lot of people come up from all around the country t' the dances there, an' there were always a lot of strangers we didn't know. There was always some nifty lookin' girls.

There was a good crowd already an' people kept comin' in all the time. Shug started off t' see if he could find somebody t' dance with, an' I was goin' t' do the same thing when one of the guys the old man usually hung around with came up an' asked me where he was. I told him he stayed t' home, an' the guy laughed an' gave me kind of an easy punch in the shoulder, horsin' around, an' asked me what was the matter, was the north woods gettin' him down; an' I said yeah, I guessed that was it. He was about three sheets in the wind already an' I was surprised he could even recognize I was the old man's kid. He leaned close t' me an' laughed again, an' he woulda fallen but he caught himself on one of the uprights. He didn't have no reason for laughin', but just laughed. He kinda slobbered when he did. I got a whiff of his breath an' it stunk like hell.

He was an *old* guy, about sixty. He had one bad eye an' a seamy face an' hadn't shaved for a couple days. There was a lot of old buzzards like that hung around the camps workin'.

They'd put in about a week an' then draw their pay an' go on a bender an' blow it. Usually they'd get drunk an' get rolled the first night, an' when they sobered up they wouldn't have a damned thing t' show for it. They'd just go back t' work an' then do the same thing all over.

The old man was about fifty-three or -four, an' was mean an' drank too much, but he wasn't scummy like those other guys. They didn't look like they was any good even t' themselves, an' it seemed kind of a crime, just their livin'. I hope t' God Shug an' me never look like that.

Anyway, I didn't want t' hang around him so I told him I'd see him later an' slipped off. I saw a girl over by the bar I knew an' went over an' started talkin' t' her but she was there with another guy an' looked like she'd be pretty well taken care of.

Everybody was dancin' now, an' I looked around for Shug. He was over by the booths with a little blonde. She was only about fourteen, but it looked like there wasn't much she didn't know. She had kind of a dirty mouth an' her hair needed combin' but she was sort of cute. She came up t' about his chin an' he was holdin' her real tight to him an' they were dancin' close like that. She kept lookin' up at him like she thought he was God on wheels. Then Shug said somethin' t' her an' she giggled so loud people turned t' look at them, an' they went outside. Shug sure knew how it was done, all right. I about went nuts just watchin' 'em.

When I was standin' there a woman about twenty-five or so came up an' asked me if I wanted t' dance. It was the first time a woman ever asked me t' dance with her. I always thought I was the man that was supposed t' do the askin'. But I told her sure, an' we moved out on the floor.

She wasn't anybody I'd ever seen before. She'd been drinkin' an' her face was kinda flushed but she had dark hair an' was damned nice lookin' — better 'n Shug's girl. We'd danced just a little bit when she put her head down on my shoulder an' burped an' looked up at me an' blinked an' laughed an' said, "Jesus, sonny, you're sure some dancer," an' then kinda stumbled against me. I didn't say any thing an' we danced over into the corner, kinda. She was just drunk enough t' be friendly, an' the music was too fast for her t' keep step to without stumblin' so we just stood there in the corner together, swayin' back an' forth, keepin' time to it. Before long she was crammin' it against me an' I took ahoida her hand an' we went outside. We went down by the river t' a place I knew of where there was trees an' grass. It was real dark out. The path was rocky an' she stumbled once but I caught her an' kept her from fallin'. She wanted t' know if I had anythin' t' drink an' I told her no an' she said Jesus, she sure could use a shot. I had her hand an' sat down on the grass an' pulled her down with me. She laid back in my arms, real relaxed, an' I kissed her. When I finished she shuddered, "Oh

Jesus, daddy," like the breath was knocked outa her, an' grabbed my head an' pulled my mouth down onta hers again real quick.

She sure was somethin'. She kept moanin', an' bitin' my mouth every time I kissed her. You could smell whisky on her breath but that kinda made it more excitin'. I got all trembly just touchin' her. It was different bein' with her than a girl because she was a grown woman. Her name was Maxine Hansen an' she lived out on No. 1 someplace. She came with her husband, but he couldn't dance an' she said he never wanted her t' have any fun. He was off drinkin' with some friends of his an' talkin' loggin'.

You could hear the music from inside an' the wind in the trees an' the water suckin' the bank. She asked me how old I was an' I lied an' told her twenty. I don't know whether she believed me or not, but she said *Jesus* again, which seemed t' be her favorite word.

We went back in an' danced some more, but she wanted t' go back outside again. We went back t' the same place an' she took aholda my hand an' pulled me along, half runnin'.

We were outside for a real long time. About three hours, all together. I got pretty fagged after a while an' wanted t' call it quits but she always wanted t' stay some more an' in the end we did.

When we finally *did* go back in I flipped her four bits an' told her t' buy herself a beer while I looked up a guy, an' when she went over t' the

bar I started huntin' Shug. I looked all around an' didn't see anythin' of him, when just then he came in from outside, but with a different girl than I'd seen him goin' out with when we first got there. This new one looked like she'd been cryin', an' when Shug saw me he nodded his head sideways toward her an' winked an' grinned. An old geezer about fifty came up an' took aholda the girl's arm an' steered her off, an' was bawlin' her out, in a low voice so no one could hear him, but you could tell he was plenty mad. I guess it musta been her old man an' she musta said somethin' about Shug, because he started comin' towards us lookin' madder 'n hell. Some of the dancers got in his way, an' while he was tryin' t' get around them I grabbed aholda Shug's arm an' pulled him outside. I said we'd better scam the hell outa there. Shug didn't want t' go yet but I jerked my thumb back towards the open door an' we looked back an' saw the old guy who had been with the girl standin' there on the top step of the porch with the light comin' out around him, an' we ducked in behind some parked cars an' kept ducked down till we got t' the Ford, so I don't think he saw us. Shug drove again, an' for about ten miles neither one of us said anythin', but we sure *felt* good. Then Shug told me about the girls he'd had an' asked me how I made out. I told him good, an' that I had another date for next Saturday night with the same cookie. Shug grinned an' said that reminded him of a joke he heard, an' he told

it an' pretty soon we were both laughin'.

All this time we didn't think about the old man once. At least *I* didn't. Just when that old guy came up t' me an' asked where he was when we first got there. I didn't feel very guilty, even, or ashamed about our bein' there. Maybe if the old man woulda let you do somethin' t' help him some way it woulda been different. But when he acted like he did I thought like Shug did, that by God if that's the way he wanted it that's the way he could have it. I kept thinkin' about what a bang-up time I was havin', an' how lucky I was t' meet somebody like Maxine. It sure was funny how she picked *me*. Just like it was supposed t' happen that way, or somethin'. I couldn't stop thinkin' about her. She sure had me goin'. . . .

IV

When we got back t' camp it musta been about two o'clock. We drove into the yard an' stopped an' everythin' was real dark an' quiet. We went inside an' Shug fumbled around for a match an' found one an' lit it. The place smelled like a whisky barrel.

Shug held the match up, cupping it in his hands, an' we could see what had happened. The old man had been outa bed an' had the gallon of moon an' been goin' pretty strong. He was in bed again, but he wasn't covered up, an' the bed clothes were all down at one end an' some of them were on the floor.

The match burned down t' Shug's fingers an' nipped them, an' he dropped it an' fished out another. This time he lit the lamp an' we could see better what was up. The old man was in his underwear, but the bloody place on his side had dried and it didn't look red any more, but kind of brown. He lay on his good side, with his back to us. He'd passed out but he was breathin' all right. He'd had a fire goin' in the barrel heater an' there was still some coals left, so I put a stick of dry tamarack an' some pieces of birchbark in an' it blazed up right away. Shug started undressin', an' had his shirt off an' was unbucklin' his pants when the old man gave a kind of wild, crazy moan that turned into a bellow an' lurched over onto his back an' looked up at us. He blinked at the light, kinda stupidly, like he wondered what it was doin' there. He looked a little bit like the old guy at Hayslip's. He was drunk as hell, but his side seemed t' be hurtin' him pretty bad, too. His face was all twisted up with pain, an' he grabbed at his side an' let another bellow outa him like a wounded steer. His eyes were closed when he did this, an' he opened them an' glared at us an' yelled at us wantin' t' know where in hell we'd been. Just like he didn't know. I started t' say somethin' but Shug motioned me t' keep quiet an' then neither of us answered him but just stood there lookin'. The old man ranted on an' said it was sure as hell a fine thing when we'd go an' leave him alone

like that, an' right in the middle of it he grabbed at his side again an' his face went real white an' he raised up an' gagged an' dropped back on the pillow. I didn't know whether he was puttin' on or not. Then he reared up again an' yelled, "Oh, Jesus Ch-rist!" an' tossed around till I thought his side would start bleedin' again, but it didn't. He may have been bleedin' inside, but we didn't know.

Quite a long time went by an' nobody did anything, but just stood there watchin'. It was gettin' hot as hell in the shack, an' I went over t' the barrel heater an' shut off the damper. Shug had his shirt off an' didn't notice it much.

The old man was worse than ever. "Oh my God!" he screamed. "Oh dying divine Christ!" The pain was goin' through him in flashes, kinda, an' he kept grippin' at his side but he seemed t' have worn himself out an' t' not have much strength left any more. His eyes were glassy, but still wide open an' starin'. Shug an' I killed a buzzard once, an' just before it croaked it puked at us an' its eyes were like the old man's were. . . .

The old man's hands were pawin' at his throat an' he couldn't get his breath right. He gave kind of a

choked-up cough, an' the clot of blood an' snot that was blockin' his throat barked out onto his chest. He lifted himself a little bit an' looked at it, then fell back an' started *cryin'* an' cussin' us. The tears ran down the sides of his face an' were soaked up by the pillow.

All the time he was bawlin' he kept swearin' at us till he'd called us every cuss word there was about a dozen times an' his voice rattled till yuh couldn't make out what he was sayin'. An' even after he couldn't talk any more his lips kept formin' the cuss words.

Both of us were pretty uneasy. Shug put his shirt on an' came over an' stood by me an' asked me if I thought we oughta try an' make him go t' a doctor or somethin'. I said I didn't know but I guessed we'd probably better.

I asked the old man, but he didn't say anythin'. When we looked down we saw some green stuff had come outa his nose, an' Shug tried t' cover his face up quick before I seen it. I jerked the covers back an' stared at him an' whirled on Shug an' moaned, "Oh my God, what'd we *do?*" an' Shug was scared too an' slapped me across the face real hard an' told me t' keep my damned mouth shut.



THE THEATRE

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN



ON AND OFF THE RECORD

Fantasy. The American audience in the aggregate asks that the theatre merely satisfy the imagination it already has rather than stimulate it to new and unaccustomed flights. It is for this reason that fantasy, except on the more elementary levels, is seldom successful with it. The fantasy it is capable of assimilating and willing to accept is strictly limited to that with toy wings, in other words, that of someone like Barrie, which amounts mainly to fanciful child's play in knee pants. Let a writer permit his imagination to soar beyond the ghostly patter of baby feet, dreams in which downcast slaveys envision themselves as Cinderellas wooed by handsome princes, or magic woods in which the characters learn what they might have been, and by and large he will be bound for disaster. For the fantasy which with very few exceptions flourishes on our stage is the rudimentary fantasy of gauze curtains, off-stage flutes, and penny valentines in four

dollar boxes. That which goes even a little farther in its journey through the mists to the stars, that which combines fancy with wit and wit with poetic invention, most often is doomed.

From the now distant day of Eleanor Gates' experimental *The Poor Little Rich Girl* to the later day of Margaret Curtis' admirable *A Highland Fling*, the story has been the same. What the public cherishes is not any such freshness of inspiration, not any such amalgam of vivacious imagery and humor, but rather, at the highest, Maeterlinckian kindergarten charades about blue birds symbolic of happiness which are ever accommodatingly to be found close to one's own fireside; in the middle ground, adaptations of Continental plays in which impoverished artists fall asleep and dream horrible dreams about being married to rich women; and, at rock bottom, exhibits about sedate college professors who fall in love with circus equestriennes but conclude, after much wandering about in Expressionist settings, that they are

safer off with students' ponies than with lady acrobats' horses.

For one *Liliom* that exceptionally manages to win the public's favor, fantasies like *My Heart's in the Highlands*, delicately lovely and gently musical, hence must fail of popular approval. Even classics like *The Tempest*, indeed, must rest for their appeal chiefly on college boys and girls and others sedulously education bent, and must seek to coax a wider trade with artifices like trick revolving stages, name ballet dancers as Ariels, and wags of the Abbott and Costello school in the rôles of Trinculo and Stephano, not to mention well-known ex-prize fighters as Calibans.

The hard row that fantasy has to hoe is indicated in the fact that of the recorded 56 plays which have accomplished runs of 500 or more performances on the New York stage in the last 50 years but one, *The Green Pastures*, was to be described as a fantasy, and even there the description misses strict accuracy. *Harvey* and *Blithe Spirit*, which have figured in the list, are fantasies only in relatively small detail and are rather to be designated as whimsical comedies. Fully nine tenths of the real fantasies produced in the period were failures. To be generally prosperous, fantasy is most safely to be made into musical comedy like, for example, *One Touch of Venus* or *I Married an Angel*, and its mild volitations made digestible through interruptions of song and dance.

Genuine fantasy is, however, no

facile accomplishment and only too often the blame is shared with the audience by the playwright. "One of the intellectual amusements of my school-days," wrote William Archer in 1897, "was to make a formless scrabble of ink on a piece of paper and, while the ink was still wet, to fold the paper together. When re-opened, it exhibited a hideous blot, to which, however, its sheer symmetry imparted a semblance of design, so that the eye of imagination could find in it a butterfly, or a dragon, or a spread-eagle, or some other bipennate and fantastic object." Any number of the fantasies attempted by our ambitious but imperfectly equipped playwrights resemble that folded paper and its design. There is nothing of value and sense in them save what the childishly eager eye fools itself into imagining it discerns.

Getting Out from Under. For many years now, my departure after the first act from a play that is obviously worthless has variously entertained and outraged my good friends on the newspapers. They can not, it seems, understand how anyone, even a critic of almost 50 years' professional experience, can possibly tell the quality of a play after seeing only one third or half of it. If you were to ask them if it is impossible for them to judge a baseball pitcher who has given nine successive bases on balls in a single inning, or a prize fighter who has been knocked down three times

for counts of eight in the first round, or a newspaper whose salary checks have bounced for successive weeks, they would hardly pause for a reply. But they appear to regard the theatre as so excessively mysterious that, even if a play's first hour reveals it to be an unmistakable catastrophe, it may nevertheless suddenly thereafter bloom like a rose and turn out in the end to be something of a masterwork. It is a pretty idea, but my optimism is not of such bulk. I am willing to be convinced, but thus far in half a century no proof, alas, has been forthcoming.

Abandon such low references to baseball players, fighters, and honoraria and regard more relevantly the novel. You have dined satisfactorily, have installed yourself in a comfortable chair, have settled back in it, have casually picked up a book to pass what you hope will be a pleasant evening, and open the covers. The first thing that engages your eyes is the sentence:

One fine morning in May a fine carriage stopped before Madame Selini's door, and from it descended a handsome, aristocratic gentleman, evidently of the old school.

You groan, but let things take their course and read on:

He was ushered into a handsomely furnished room where, in a few minutes, he was joined by Madame Selini herself. Sir Oswald bowed with stately courtesy and quaint, old-fashioned grace. "Have you been so fortunate, madame, as to find that which I am in search of?" he inquired. "I think you will be pleased, Sir Oswald;

nay, I am sure you will," answered the lady. "I have a lady waiting to see you now who will prove, I should say, a treasure!"

At this point, if your education in belles-lettres has progressed further than Upton Sinclair and kindergarten, you instruct your handsome and aristocratic manservant to seize the book gingerly with his thumb and forefinger, to bear it with courtly grace from the premises, and to deposit it in the most convenient jardiniere, while you yourself hop out of your chair, grab your hat and coat, and seek relief in the nearest tap-room. You know perfectly well that any such novel — you muse that the author was Bertha M. Clay — could not conceivably improve as it went on, and that if you were charitable enough to continue in its presence you would duly encounter such added bilge as

Madame quitted the room with gliding, subtle grace and then Sir Oswald, in his courtly fashion, placed a chair for Miss Hastings . . . an elegant, well-dressed lady with a quiet grace and dignity that seemed natural to her; there was not the slightest trace of awkwardness or *mauvaise hante* in her manner. . . . "My dear madame," said Sir Oswald, "can you imagine what a wild vine is — a vine that has never been cultivated or pruned but allowed to grow wild in all its natural beauty and strength, to cling where it would, to trail on the ground and to twine round forest trees? Such a vine is a fit type for my niece!"

You know perfectly well, in brief, that, if anything in this wide world

begins and continues for a while in any such vein and manner, there is not the slightest likelihood that it will soon or late overwhelm you with an improvement so remarkable that it will pitch you out of your seat. And in exactly the same way you know that any Broadway play which begins with lines like "No woman forgets a husband very easily — unless he's living with her all the time," "I think you have a splendid brain — for a woman," and "Every time I look at you I could hiccup," cannot imaginably get to be any better even if it runs until three o'clock the next morning.

Summing up Coward. A recent second view of Noel Coward's comedy, *Private Lives*, throws into bold relief both his characteristic, steady faults and occasional merits. To his minor credit are the trick of successfully passing off foam for champagne, now and then a sense of the comic value of a smartly chosen word, and an ability in ellipsis, with its mild surprise, where he appreciates his inability amusingly to support and sustain more extended treatment of a scene. His chief weakness is his unintentional artificiality. He usually impresses one as believing that his people are drawn pretty closely from life, yet they stubbornly turn out in his hands and through his idiosyncrasies of mind to be either caricatures of caricatures or phonograph-wired manikins, all bearing an approximate resemblance to Coward himself. He

thus much less traces the society of his period, as his admirers claim, than a segment of it as he imagines it would be if it were constituted largely of various manifestations of himself. His comedies are accordingly not reflections of an era but reflections of and on Coward, in an automatically distorted mirror; and their final effect is of a topical song scored for a bass and rendered in tenor.

The late James Agate defined the Coward technique from the particular to the general as beginning with some perfectly serious theme, stripping it of its seriousness, and finally making a long nose at it. "They were nothing, sir, be they addressed to what they may!" he quoted Dr. Johnson as saying to a clergyman who had asked whether it was not a fact that Dodd's sermons were addressed to the passions. And then, referring to one of Coward's plays, he noted that it is nothing whether it be addressed to our sense of the past, our feeling that *Bitter Sweet* should have a coda, or the author's hankering after a new genre.

Though only one example of Coward's work was in mind, the criticism seems in many respects to be apt in a more comprehensive view. In most of the plays a sense of the past is evoked in one by the rupturous strain on Coward's part to be excessively modern, which only gives his work the color of a forced and painstaking withdrawal from yesterday, like a ready-made short skirt that has been let out to satisfy the "new look." In

most of the plays, too, there is the transparent fear of normality and honest sentiment and the furious gesture at airy cynicism, like a small boy's protective grunt at another small boy when the latter catches him talking to a pretty little girl. And in most of them, as well, there is patently the ferocious determination to achieve something startlingly new, even at the expense of considered sense, like a woman who adds a stuffed parrot to an old but attractive and perfectly serviceable hat in the hope of making it seem of the ultra-mode.

All this is not to say that Coward hasn't a skill of sorts. He has. It is the skill, however, not of a dramatic artist but of a clever vaudevillian. It knows its audience; it wears the right spangles; its animal act in which lap dogs, cats and donkeys go through the motions of human beings is fair hanky-panky; and it makes money. It also enjoys the surface glitter of a mica trove, and is as valuable. It is often, in a word, what is called "good theatre" by people who believe that good drama is a violation of the phrase.

SAILORS OF INFINITY

BY CHARLES NORMAN

Redolent of ocean, cool as a wave,
 The night is sluiced into these streets of stone;
 The wind is one more billow of the sea,
 Plashing spindrift of sound upon the roofs.
 Do you not feel these combers of the air,
 High, thin, and edged with salt, roll over us?
 The world drifts in the fathoms of the sky,
 A starry raft upon a sea of lamps;
 Look now: the moon sets sail in its bright tide.
 We, too, are sailors of infinity,
 Voyagers in the longitudes of space,
 Lonelier than all who once upon the deep
 Pointed their prows and held the helm hard down
 To lands and islands girt by foam and song.

PLIGHT OF A SMALL-TOWN PARSON

BY HENRY H. HOFFSTRETTER

LAST week I celebrated my tenth year as pastor of Norwin Church, and (since Norwin is my second parish) my fifteenth year in the ministry.

There was a dinner of course. And there were a number of speeches, all of them liberally sprinkled with pleasantries and compliments which were soon forgotten. All, that is, except one. That one stuck in my mind long after the dinner was finished.

The Rev. Dr. Fred Meister, one of the regional leaders of our denomination, was speaking:

"Hank," he said, turning to me and smiling, "I'll wager that even if you had the whole job to do over again, with all the benefit of your experience here, you wouldn't be able to do a better piece of work!"

Well, it was nice to hear him say that. And it was nice to hear some of the other things he said in his speech. But those ten words stamped themselves indelibly on my mind: "— if you had the whole job to do over again . . ."

I wondered about those words — wondered whether I would ever *want* to do the job over again. I'm still

wondering. It's quite a question. In trying to answer it, I'm trying to stick to facts.

Ten years ago, when I first came to Norwin, it was a little church with a membership of slightly more than 250. Today its membership is almost double that figure — and is still growing.

Ten years ago the total budget of Norwin Church was a little less than \$4000. Today it is three times as much. (During this past year alone, salary increases for employees of the church — including the pastor — have amounted to nearly two thousand dollars. That's not bad, as churches go!)

Ten years ago Norwin Church was struggling along under a \$38,000 debt of rather ancient vintage. The congregation had almost got used to living under its dark shadow. Today that debt is non-existent, the entire church property has been considerably renovated, and a large proportion of its equipment has been thoroughly modernized.

Ten years ago Norwin Church was, we thought, a moderately busy

HENRY H. HOFFSTRETTER is the pastor of a small church in the Eastern United States. For obvious reasons, all the names and places mentioned by him are fictitious.

little place. It was often "open for business" as much as three or four days a week. Today it runs on a steady seven-day-schedule, and frequently three or four activities are going on in it simultaneously. During the current season, for example, more than 400 organizational activities are scheduled to be held in the church building itself, or in the Recreation Hall, next door.

Increasingly during the years Norwin Church has become a "community center," since there is no other focal point in our neighborhood for many of the community's activities. Altogether, it makes the clergyman's life a rather interesting — if somewhat hectic — experience. A mere catalog of some of the items involved in the ordinary routine of daily living will perhaps be enough to indicate what I mean. For instance:

My wife and I belong, officially or otherwise, to every organization in the church. And we are expected to attend the meetings of those organizations. In one month's time, for example, one or the other, or both of us, attend all functions of the following groups: the Church School, the Choir, the Service Board, the Council, the Board of Trustees, the Brotherhood, the Girl's Friendship Circle, the Young Women's Association, the Dorcas Society, the Couples' Club, the Missionary Fellowship, the Christian Endeavor — and others, including a good many committee meetings of the above organizations.

Since we are also expected to take a fairly prominent part in community activities, the list could be prolonged to include attendance at sessions of the PTA, the Boy Scout Troop Committee, public functions of the American Legion, the VFW, *et al.* And since I, at any rate, am expected to take some part in church activities on a broader scale, I must now and again be in evidence at some of the functions of the local Council of Churches, the interfaith groups, our own denominational Council, the Ministerial Association and our denominational Ministers' Fellowship — together with occasional committee meetings of the same. Youth Rallies of both the Council of Churches and our own denomination are more or less optional activities for us; but it isn't wise for us to absent ourselves even from these for any great length of time, lest we acquire the reputation of neglecting our young people.

II

There is a curious superstition, unfortunately quite prevalent in these United States, that no organization can operate properly for any considerable period without indulging some sort of communal Breakfast, or Luncheon, or Dinner. It seems to have become part of the ritual which is called The American Way of Life. During the last fortnight my wife or I, or both of us (plus, sometimes, our daughter), have attended such functions as these: one Anniversary Dinner (mentioned at the beginning

of this article), one Breakfast of the Ministers' Fellowship, one Luncheon of the Ministerial Association, one Light Supper of a Youth Rally, three Committee Luncheons, one Dinner of the American Legion, one Luncheon of the Dorcas Society, one Supper of the Couples' Club, one Late Supper of the Choir, one Dinner of the Brotherhood (restricted to members and their guests), one Dinner of the Brotherhood (open to the public at \$1.65 per plate). At some of the above, we were "invited guests" in the pleasant sense of the word; our tickets were complimentary. At others, we were guests in a stricter, more limited sense: We were expected to attend; we were also expected to pay our way. The total cost was \$19.75 in tickets and "offerings," not including the cost of the Choir Supper for which my wife was hostess. Rather a sizable addition to the family food bill — especially when multiplied over and over again in the course of a year!

But these are activities of a more formal sort. On the informal side there is a still larger variety.

The house in which we live ("the parsonage," if you're used to ecclesiastical terminology) is a part of the church's property, is located next door to the Recreation Hall, and, consequently, is considered to be open-house for the community. We have more or less got used to it, in much the same way as the operator of an air hammer gets used to the ear-splitting clatter that goes with his

job. Once in a while, however, we have guests — relatives and others — who haven't had a chance to become immunized to the routine; they leave us, generally, in a state bordering on nervous collapse.

It's the open-house business that does it, usually. This can readily be illustrated by a random sampling of visitors who appear at the parsonage in the course of a single day, together with their requests (or demands, as the case may be). They may, or may not, ring the bell before they walk in:

Visitor: Swarthy truck driver; a stranger. Request: How is he supposed to get that trap door open? — he has a load of coal for the church. (The trap door in question jams easily. We go out with him and show him how to pry it open.)

Visitor: Member of the Dorcas Society. Request: Could she please have the key to the linen closet? She has some dish towels to put away. (There follows a period, of uncertain duration, in which the lady remains standing in the doorway; covers six or eight items of neighborhood gossip; does an expert job of extracting every possible drop of juice from each item; says, at length, she must hurry on about her business; departs.)

Interval: Five minutes.

Visitor: Milkman. Request: None. Just likes to drop in for a chat. He chats for half an hour.

Visitor: Garbage collector; private individual who does this sort of thing for a living; makes a pretty good living at it, too. Request: Can we

please speak to the janitor or whoever-it-is-that-does-it and ask said person, or persons, *not* to put tin cans and broken glass in the garbage? (From his conversation, which is a little distracted, it would appear that his pigs have some difficulty in assimilating such articles. He is perturbed. He has made this request before, he reminds me, but the situation to date has shown no improvement.)

Interval of quietness: Twenty-five minutes. I go up to my study; assemble copy for next week's bulletins.

Next visitor: Young man; manager of gas station up the street; member, entertainment committee of the Couples' Club. Request: Could he see the Reverend please? Since his demeanor indicates that this is strictly a confidential matter, my wife calls me from the study and discreetly disappears. I go down and talk with young man. Young man's request is stated: Could I please see to it that three or four extra cases of soft drinks are ordered next week? The Couples' Club will be dancing after their dinner on Thursday, and it seems that when they dance they develop quite a thirst.

Interval of quietness till noon: An hour and a half. I finish assembling copy for bulletins; work on Sunday's sermon.

Visitor: Our daughter, home from school. Demand: Where's lunch? — she's *ravenous!* (She picked up the word three days ago; has used it constantly since then.) Lunch concluded, she departs.

My wife hastily retires to prepare herself for meeting of the Missionary Fellowship.

One o'clock.

Visitor: Member of Missionary Fellowship. Query: Is my wife ready to come over to the church? The ladies have assembled; the luncheon is prepared; they're waiting for my wife to ask the blessing. (My wife says she'll be ready in five minutes. Member of Missionary Fellowship sits down, rivets me to the spot with discussion of what is — to her — a vital piece of church business. Gist of discussion is as follows: Did I know that the Young People played kissing games at their last social? . . . No? Well they *did*. . . . Member of Missionary Fellowship is somewhat incensed about the whole business. Such a thing as that will give the church a bad name. It doesn't make a bit of difference that the social was held in a private home; young people never did things like that when she was a girl, etc., etc., etc. Wife appears. They depart. Since member of Missionary Fellowship did not suggest that I take drastic and specific action along the lines of osculatory recreation, I conclude that she has merely mentioned the matter for the purpose of blowing off steam and inflating her own private sense of virtue.)

Interval: Three minutes.

Visitor: Janitor of church; works half-time for church, half-time for aged wealthy couple on small estate nearby. Request: Would I approve purchase of new dust-pan? Original is

lost; he's looked high and low for it; is sure he had it last Friday morning when he cleaned the Primary Department, but can't find it now; is absolutely positive he put it in supply closet, but somebody's taken it; wishes there was some way we could get out of giving key for the supply closet to every Tom, Dick and Harry that comes along and wants it. (I manage, finally, to consent to the purchase of a new dust-pan.)

Interval: Half an hour. I hastily bathe, shave and dress for funeral at two o'clock. Limousine pulls up in front of parsonage. I depart.

Interval: Three hours and three quarters. I conduct funeral, make five calls in different hospitals, two home calls. Return to parsonage for dinner.

Dinner.

111

During the meal my wife enumerates visitors who called while I was out, together with their requests: (1) Leader of local Girl Scout Troop. Request: Will I speak at their Parents' Night, the eighteenth? Any subject I want to speak on will be all right. (2) Middle-aged lady. Stranger. Request: Could she rent the Recreation Hall for Saturday afternoon, the sixteenth? Wedding reception. Will come back at seven o'clock to clear the date with me. (3) My wife's sister Florence. Request: None. News: She's going to have another baby; is quite upset about it; the four she's got, she thinks, are plenty.

During dinner, also, the following:

Visitor: Janitor, who has just come to open the church for the evening. Request: Would I please phone Mr. Thibault, the electrician? Janitor has just blown a fuse; can't see well enough to know which fuse it is. (I go over to church and replace fuse. It would have taken just as long to call Mr. Thibault.)

Visitor: Little boy. Request: Would we please buy a ticket for the Turkey Raffle at St. Simeon's? Request declined with thanks.

Visitor: Leader of Boys' Class. Request: Would I please open up the Recreation Hall? The janitor has left, and has absent-mindedly locked the door after him. (I produce key to Recreation Hall; give it to leader of Boys' Class. He departs.)

Visitor: Leader of Boys' Class again. Returns key. Request: Would I have time to come over and speak to the boys tonight? A number of them come regularly for Fun Night, but just as regularly are absent from Class on Sunday. Request declined; my schedule for the evening is full; can't make it.

Visitors: Two boys; adolescents; very familiar visitors at the parsonage. Request: None; they just "dropped in." (Our daughter carries on a lively conversation with them throughout the rest of the meal; plays two new Phil Harris recordings for them as they talk. The boys like the recordings; they play them over five or six times in order to learn the words. My wife and I finish dinner in a certain quiet frenzy.)

Visitor: Middle-aged lady, referred to above. Request: Can she rent Recreation Hall for Saturday afternoon, the sixteenth, 3 to 5 o'clock? (I have checked schedule. Recreation Hall is available at those hours. Lady is visibly pleased.) Further request: Can they serve a few drinks? The church wouldn't mind, would it? Wedding reception, you understand. Answer: Sorry. (Lady is plainly vexed. She never knew that a church wouldn't permit the serving of a few drinks — not in this day and age. She cancels date. Departs.)

Interval: None. I go over to church for a wedding rehearsal.

Elapsed time for rehearsal: One hour.

I go to local high school. Am scheduled to speak, at eight-thirty, on the subject, previously assigned: "The Home, the School and the Church." The meeting is running a bit behind its announced schedule. The assembled parents are having a heated debate. Its subject, I discover at length, is the fact that two boys and one girl who attended last Saturday night's dance at the school were intoxicated. The affair, hushed up at first, has now broken into the open. It has created quite a stir.

The debate goes on and on. One or two facts are disclosed, together with dozens of opinions, suppositions and conjectures. Surreptitiously, I glance at the outline for my talk. Outline was made up pretty hastily; I'm glad to have the opportunity to look it over again.

Nine-fifteen: Debate finished. No action taken. I speak.

Nine-forty: Speech finished. Refreshments. I don't have to stay for refreshments, but there has been a good deal of talk recently about my running out of meetings instead of staying and visiting with people. I stay. I drink one cup of unbelievably bad coffee; eat one doughnut; receive numerous compliments on my speech (frankly, it smelled — that outline *had* been worked up too hastily); "visit around"; depart at ten-thirty.

Home again.

Visitors: Man and wife; members of my congregation. (My wife has been entertaining them while they waited for me. When I appear, she withdraws, knowing that the visitors will want to talk with me alone.) Conference follows. Subject: The couple's daughter. She was drunk last Saturday night. Results: None; but couple seem to be relieved to have talked the situation over with someone. They depart.

Twelve-twenty. I retire to my study to go over the day's mail.

One o'clock: Mail finished. I go to bed. . . .

IV

Now while this sketch of one day's events in Norwin Church may be a little startling to those folks who believe that "all a minister has to do is preach a sermon on Sunday and sip tea with the old ladies all the rest of the week," actually — as hundreds of

ministers can testify — it is oversimplified. For it has left unmentioned a number of factors which are typical of churches like Norwin, and which enter into the picture most definitely.

There is, for example, the telephone. It was eliminated from the narrative above primarily because we were seeking to keep the story light and uncomplicated. But the phone's peculiarly annoying summons rings out in the Norwin parsonage at all hours of the day and night. It is not in the least unusual for us to have, quite literally, scores of incoming and outgoing calls in a single day. Sometimes, of course, a call comes in that is really important; on the law of averages one would expect that. . . . As for the rest of them, however —!

Again, it must be remembered that ours is a "one-horse" church, despite the fact that it runs seven days a week. In this respect, too, it is typical of hundreds of churches all over the country. It has only a part-time janitor, and no secretarial or other help whatsoever. Consequently the minister and his wife act as its total office force (for correspondence, official records and innumerable clerical details), and often they slip over to the church late at night with a dust cloth, a mop and a pail of steaming hot water, to give the place a final brushing up before some particularly important public function. These latter duties must, of necessity, be performed in absolute secrecy — for

the janitor is a member of the church, and a very touchy old bachelor to boot.

Finally, there is a factor — an immensely important one — which has merely been hinted at in the story thus far, but which should be stated specifically.

In all fairness it should be noted, first, that Norwin Church is what is known as a "giving" church. In the last decade it has not merely trebled its budget for its own expenses, but it has increased its budget for the worldwide work of the Church as well. During the past year its people have contributed more than five times as much for general benevolences as they did at the beginning of the decade.

Under the circumstances, one might be tempted to conclude that a highly benevolent spirit pervaded Norwin Church. Such is scarcely the case. The internecine warfare going on within the congregation is simply astounding — and no one knows it better than the minister. He is close enough to all phases of the church's life to know, with devastating clarity, the amount of quarreling, bickering, backbiting, criticizing, carping and complaining that goes on within the organization. If the Men's Club plans a very active program of events for the coming season, the women's organizations are soon heard to be complaining that the men are grabbing all the best dates in the year. And vice versa. If a certain individual or group takes an interest in promoting a series of activities

within the church, some members of the congregation are soon sitting back on their haunches and saying that So-and-so is *always* trying to run things! If the interests of one group run into conflict with those of another, the minister is sure to hear about it—and not from one individual, but from a half dozen or more, each one quite sure that he, or she, has the whole story straight. In one such recent instance, the minister had to listen to the same story from eight different individuals; the time consumed amounted to nearly eighteen hours! Of such cases there seems to be no end.

But it goes still further. It extends to the minister, his administration of church business, his participation in community activities, his relations with his wife, and so forth. It extends also to his wife, her conduct of household affairs, her clothes, her relations with others, both in and out of the church. Lest this generalized statement sound vague, and its tone seem to be a little on the martyred side, let's be specific:

Personally, I hate money-raising. In Norwin, however, I have had to raise money in considerable quantity. Either that, or see the church stagger along under a mountainous debt. I have, therefore, been called “un-spiritual.”

I hate a minister who plays politics in his parish. Yet I have been said to have the Norwin congregation “in the palm of my hand.” Consequently, when certain gentlemen were not

elected to offices they wanted in the church, I was said to have “engineered” the election. (This accusation, amazingly enough, was publicly made by members of the families involved—and undoubtedly believed by them, too—despite the fact that neither they themselves, nor the gentlemen who desired the election, *nor any other member of their families*, was present at the meeting where the election occurred. Yet the meeting had been announced more than a month in advance; it had been advertised in the local stores; a notice of it had been sent by mail to every member of the congregation—and, to make it yet more alluring, it was preceded by a Church Dinner!)

Well, to get on:

When I have tended to the detailed administration of church affairs, I have been deluged with criticisms for not calling enough. When I set out, as I did one season, to do a lot of calling, I was swamped with complaints from every direction—all of them to the effect that the church schedule was going haywire; conflicts and misunderstandings were occurring everywhere.

When I have a good deal of personal counseling on my hands (a matter which congregations usually know little about, but which clergymen are discovering more and more to be part of their routine work), I am criticized because I “never get away from the church.” When my calling and community activities keep me on the run for any length of time, I am

criticized for "never going near the church."

When I preach a sermon that is aimed at the younger elements in my congregation, certain pillars-of-the-church are heard to complain that the old-fashioned Gospel is fighting a losing battle in Norwin Church. If a sermon is aimed at the older generation, the young people insist it puts them to sleep.

Not long ago my wife and I attended a church dinner where one of the speakers was having an extreme case of the jitters. I did my best to make him feel at ease in the face of his coming ordeal — and a few days later I heard that it was nothing less than shameful, the way I had neglected my wife!

If my wife wears a new hat, it is a matter of (at least) public comment. If she wears old clothes, it is a matter for public disapproval. If she appears

in a dress with that "new look," she is being extravagant. If she tries to make a point of attending every general function at the church (in addition, of course, to all women's meetings), she, poor dear, is wearing herself all to a frazzle. If she does *not* appear at all functions, however, she "seems to be losing interest in the church." If she goes with me to attend community functions, it's terrible — "the way they're neglecting their daughter" . . .

And so on and on. Ad infinitum.

"— if you had the whole job to do over again . . ."

I'm still wondering about those words. I'm wondering whether I'd ever *want* to.

I'm afraid I wouldn't — not for all the tea in China.

Or, again, maybe I would. . . . Who knows?



REPORT ON THE C-MEN

BY FREDERIC SONDERN, JR.

THE big freighter bound for Antwerp was almost ready to clear her New York berth when a Customs Inspector approached the Captain. "I'm sorry," said the Customs man, "but you have 190 cases of ball bearings in your hold that will have to come off." "They're all properly licensed. They're going to Belgium," the Captain fumed. "Washington evidently doesn't think so," the Inspector replied. And a quarter of a million dollars worth of strategically priceless ball bearings — actually bound for Russian airplane plants — were hoisted out of the ship.

On the dock, watching the unloading which they had ordered, were Special Agents of the Commerce Department's Office of International Trade — the new and as yet unpublicized sentinels of our export traffic, who enforce the regulations which the government has set up to prevent the goods we ship abroad from falling into the wrong hands. These C-men had discovered, just in time, that the bearings which had ostensibly been bought by a Brussels importer for use in Belgium, had

really been paid for by a Russian-controlled firm in Czechoslovakia and were to be shipped to the USSR *via* Antwerp and Prague. High quality bearings, which the Russians seem unable to produce themselves, are one of the most serious bottlenecks of Soviet industry. Moscow will pay almost any price to get them.

The exporter, who was licensed to ship a million dollars worth of bearings to the same buyer, registered horrified surprise when he was summoned to OIT's office. Real amazement, however, began showing on his face as Special Agents confronted him with positive proof of his full knowledge of the conspiracy. He will do no more business for quite a while.

The C-men have been in existence for only a year. But they already know a great deal about the operations of the international brotherhood of unscrupulous traders who are fattening on the present worldwide unrest. Their "Watch List" — a top secret register of firms suspected of habitually violating the export regulations — is growing rapidly and indicates that many of the same people who

FREDERIC SONDERN, JR., contributed "The Fine Art of Smuggling" to the December 1947 *MERCURY*. He was formerly chief European correspondent for McClure's Syndicate, and he has written for *Life*, the *Saturday Evening Post* and many other national magazines.

shipped scrap to Japan just before Pearl Harbor and minerals to Nazi Germany up to the last possible moment, are back in business in a big way. In just three days last fall, OIT stopped \$3 million worth of highly strategic materials leaving the Port of New York for destinations behind the Iron Curtain.

"I've seen some fancy skulduggery in my day," says Edward P. Guinane, a former FBI man who runs the OIT's Enforcement Branch, "but nothing like this. They have taught me new tricks in forgery, bribery, manipulation of funds and a few other specialties." Gray-haired and deceptively mild, Guinane helped make a good bit of the early history of the FBI in the days of Dillinger and Babyface Nelson. His hard-working Agents are recruited from former members of the FBI, the State Department and other Federal agencies, for their broad investigative experience and their knowledge of both the domestic and foreign industrial scenes. Paul Medalie, Agent-in-Charge of the New York field office, which does an important part of OIT's enforcement work, was for years a member of the State Department's Foreign Service in Europe and the Far East, and made a brilliant record as an OSS operative during the war.

II

Last spring, with the rapid increase of tension everywhere, Washington realized that American exports would have to be watched almost as closely

as they were during the war, to ensure that they would not find their way to the black markets of Europe and be used to build up the war potential of the nations behind the Iron Curtain. Export controls were in force. Lists of strategic commodities — machinery, metals, chemicals, food-stuffs — had been carefully compiled, and an elaborate licensing system developed to assure the flow of crucial items only to nations friendly to the United States. The exporter applying for a license had to state exactly where his shipment was going and for what it would be used.

While honest exporters complied at once, the racketeers laughed at Washington's efforts. The Enforcement Branch of OIT then consisted of one lone man in a desolate Commerce Department annex with no authority and — not even a secretary. The Department of Commerce, responsible for export control, frowned on police activity, and would take no action. Millions of dollars worth of goods badly needed here and in war-torn areas flowed into the European black market and the Russian zone of the Continent. Forged and altered export licenses were being sold openly in New York for a few hundred dollars each. In European transportation centers, buying agents with shrewd representatives in the United States were making fortunes. Steel pipe in Antwerp is worth, to Russian buyers, three times its New York price. Certain types of heavy industrial machinery bring even more of a profit.

Not long ago, a Russian-controlled Czechoslovakian firm offered an American exporter a \$3 million commission to arrange the shipment of a steel rolling mill. He was to have another \$850,000 to use for bribery and "other incidentals." The exporter played along until he had all the facts, then took his story to Washington.

A number of similar cases finally jogged the Commerce Department into realizing the scope and importance of its OIT's job. Meanwhile Senator Kenneth Wherry's Small Business Committee had investigated the complaints of a number of honest exporters and discovered a shocking situation. Building nails desperately needed at home for veterans' housing were going to Argentina to build villas for cattle barons. Streptomycin, almost unobtainable by American doctors, was plentiful, at a price, in Latin America. Wherry was extremely articulate. The Commerce Department, despite its ancient tradition of protecting the American exporter, right or wrong, gave in and set up its Enforcement and Compliance Branch.

Close cooperation was set up with the Treasury's Customs Service, whose shrewd Inspectors make the actual examination of the goods that leave our docks. The C-men and the Customs people have become an effective team. "Smuggling out," one of the Service chiefs said to me, "has gotten to be as much of a headache to us as smuggling in." OIT's Enforcement Branch is still understaffed. It has

only a few dozen Special Agents to watch the entire export business of the country, which dispatches some 10,000 shipments abroad a day from the Port of New York alone. Judging from the huge volume of goods which they have already stopped, they have a grim battle ahead, as the European Recovery Program gains momentum.

III

"You have to have eyes in the back of your head," as one OIT official put it. "And a ninth sense plus a vast knowledge of almost everything." He was speaking of an application which came into the Washington office recently — for permission to export several hundred pairs of an unusual type of long rubber glove. According to the applicant's declaration, they were consigned to a Spanish chemical manufacturer. The Special Agent examining it happened to know something about industrial chemistry and began to wonder what process would require the use of that peculiar rubber compound to protect the wearer of the gloves. His first inquiry, *via* the State Department, revealed that the "chemical manufacturer," in whose name the Spanish export-import firm had ordered the gloves did not exist. State also warned that the Spanish importer was known to do most of its business with Bucharest, Sofia and other Eastern European capitals. The gloves were obviously meant for trans-shipment across Europe, and the license was peremptorily denied.

The Special Agent investigated further and found that this type of glove had been designed exclusively for our atomic fission laboratories, to be used in the handling of certain dangerous materials.

In this case, both the American manufacturer and his exporter were innocent of any complicity. "But it just goes to show," the C-man concluded, "how careful we have to be."

Unfortunately, the American exporter is often culpable. The Case of Many Letterheads is one of the C-men's favorites. Under the regulations, the exporter must present with his license application the actual order from the importer abroad. In the early days of OIT, these "firm orders" were accepted as proof of the shipment's ultimate destination. But one day last summer, a Special Agent in Washington was examining a batch of applications and their accompanying "firm orders," when one of the latter caught his eye. He sent for a certain file. Within a few minutes, a number of letters were spread out on his desk. They were all apparently from highly respectable foreign concerns to a particular New York exporter. All requested shipments of crucial goods for specific and highly laudable purposes — mining machinery for France, roller bearings for Portugal, chemicals for Italy. But in each one of the letters certain similarities appeared. The first letter of the dateline was not written in capital letters, the word "following" was spelled "fellowing," and the secre-

tary's initials in the lower left hand corner were the same. When Special Agents descended on the exporter's office, he just happened, unfortunately for him, to be sorting an impressive collection of letterheads of prominent European business houses. He finally admitted that some had been obtained by ruse, some stolen, others printed by himself. Almost all of the firm orders, on which several hundred thousand dollars worth of licenses had been granted, had been written in his own office. The goods had been shipped to intermediate agents in various overseas ports who had then changed their ultimate destinations. The versatile letter-writer will probably live at Uncle Sam's expense for quite a while.

Since the Many Letterheads case, the OIT has expanded its foreign contacts considerably. Now, when the C-men have any doubts about the final destination of a large critical shipment, American representatives on the spot investigate the consignee. If he is untrustworthy, word is flashed back to Washington, and the license is held up or refused.

IV

But there are still many dodges which the racketeers try with great regularity. One day, recently, a Customs Inspector called the OIT's New York field office. "We have a shipload of fence posts here for Egypt," he told the Special Agent-in-Charge. The C-man pointed out that fence posts didn't need a license, no matter

where they were going. "I know," said the Inspector. "But these are the darndest ones I've ever seen. You better come and have a look." The "fence posts" that were being loaded on the ship were 20-foot lengths of steel boiler pipe—a crucial item. The exporter, who arrived hastily at the pier, explained that it was old pipe, that the lengths were to be cut up after arrival in Egypt—it was cheaper that way—and pointed out the series of small holes bored in the steel at regular intervals. "You see," he said, "this is where the fence wire will run through." The Special Agent shook his head. "Those are remarkably small holes for fence wire, and very far apart. If they were welded up, you'd still have pretty good boiler pipe." The "fence posts" did not get to Egypt.

Crooked exporters try every kind of misrepresentation to classify goods into categories which do not have to be licensed. Brass pipe is called "plumbers' goods," three inch building nails are labelled "shoe nails," electric cable is packed as "lamp cord." A consignment of "office dictating machines" turned out to be the latest type wire recorders—in great demand by Russian buyers for military purposes. One exporter, recently, even tried "solidified milk fat"—it turned out to be butter. This used to work, until the coming of OIT—the Customs Service team.

In the early days of OIT, racketeers found that forgery of export licenses was both easy and profitable. But

today licenses are filled out with special machines on special paper, and C-men can immediately detect any illegal alterations. With the Watch List and a complicated but astonishingly effective filing system in Washington, the dishonest exporters are having an increasingly difficult time of it.

"But the moment we stop up one hole," an OIT official said to me, "they think of another one." With profits on the European black market what they are, it pays dishonest American exporters to pay for complicated trans-shipments and long routes to beat the regulations. One of the neatest tricks of trans-shipment was discovered recently at the Free Port of New York, an area of the harbor where goods may be loaded from one vessel to another without Customs inspection, as long as they leave the port without going inland. Watchful Customs Inspectors noticed that a number of shipments coming by sea from Canada and consigned to various American coastal ports, suddenly had their destinations changed to European ports and were stowed aboard transatlantic freighters. This was legal, as far as our Customs laws were concerned. But since the shipments involved were tin-plate—a highly strategic material—Customs notified OIT. It didn't take the C-men long to find out what was going on.

A New York import-export firm of doubtful integrity had received word from one of its Eastern European contacts that the Bulgarian govern-

ment was in the market for several hundred thousand dollars worth of tin-plate, with a fat commission of \$150,000 to the American agent. The prospective dealer applied for a license, but the OIT pointed out that shipping tin-plate to Bulgaria was not in the best interests of the United States, and refused it. Then he thought of Canada and the Free Port. Anything may be sent from Canada to the United States, and vice versa, without a license. He found an equally unscrupulous agent in Canada who bought the material and arranged shipment. The rest was easy — until the C-men arrived on the scene.

v

To keep informed of the routes the black marketeers are using, OIT occasionally lets go a "tracer" — an important shipment which the C-men suspect is not going to its declared destination. But from the time it leaves the United States, it is carefully watched. In a recent check-up of electrical equipment going to France, Italy and other Marshall Plan countries, OIT experts found that considerable quantities of highly crucial items were not reaching their consignees, and seemed to be disappearing into thin air. A number of shipments were ear-marked by the C-men when the licenses for them were granted. When one, for example, arrived at a French port, U. S. agents were there to meet it. They were watching as its original destination in France was painted out and

a new one, in Switzerland, stencilled in. In one of the Swiss rail centers, they were again on hand to see the addresses altered once more. Carefully recording the names of the various shippers and agents through which the complicated forwarding moved, the Americans followed their decoy through Austria and, in Czechoslovakia, watched it disappear behind the Iron Curtain. OIT now has an almost complete map of that route, and hopes, in time, to have all international black market routes equally well charted.

With more and more of this information in the hands of OIT, it is becoming increasingly difficult for our racketeers to keep their secrets. The other day, one delighted trader — with a brand new letter of credit for \$150,000 in his pocket — returned from his bank to his office to complete arrangements for the dispatch of a large number of jeeps to Lebanon. His license had been granted, the ship was ready to load them, and no one apparently suspected a thing. He did not seem worried even when he found two Special Agents waiting for him. "We would like to see your file on those jeeps you're sending to Lebanon," said Agent-in-Charge Medalie. "Just routine, you know." The exporter beamed. "Why certainly. You will see that everything is quite in order." Unfortunately for him, he had carelessly neglected to remove from the file a note from his correspondent in Lebanon. It said that the buyer of the jeeps, *in Rumania*,

was beginning to worry about the promised shipment.

This was not just a stab in the dark by the C-men. They knew that certain shipments to Lebanon had recently developed a way of going northward — and jeeps are much in demand by the Russian military establishment.

The strict enforcement of the export control laws has become far more than a guarantee against shortages at home. By withholding strategic ma-

terials from the stockpiles of countries behind the Iron Curtain, U. S. export control reduces their war potential and becomes an essential part of our national security and our foreign policy — economic and political. The C-men cost the American taxpayer only \$300,000 out of OIT's annual \$4.5 million budget. They are probably the most inexpensive enforcement agency in the Federal government. At several times the price, they would still be a good investment.

NO ESCAPE

BY ELMA DEAN

I shall go into my garden, I said,
and bar the green doors.
I shall stop my ears with bird song
against the cries of the people.

I barred the green doors
and I walked
under a ceiling of leaves . . .
and no linnet sang and no sparrow.
Only a jay, circling close,
screamed like a woman.

The moss at my feet was an ooze
where I sank as I went.
And the blooms that I loved
turned gray, the color
going out of them slowly as from
the cheeks of a child dying.
They reeked with an odor of death.
And dark came in the middle of morning
and put out my sun.

LIFE IN A COUNTY JAIL

ANONYMOUS

A FEW years ago I was assigned by a national magazine to write an article on the general condition of the county jails throughout the United States. There are more than 3000 of these jails, and what I found out about them in the course of my researches was pretty discouraging. I learned that most of them were rotting, vermin-infested structures, where wardens and inmates were reduced to a common level of brutality, and where several varieties of racketeering were common. From my own investigations, and from the Federal Bureau of Prison reports, which I also studied, it was obvious to me that prisoners generally come out of county jails in worse shape, physically, mentally and morally, than they go into them.

At the time I was writing the article I wondered vaguely why nothing was done about these jails. But, to be perfectly frank, I was never able to work up any real indignation over the conditions. Most of the men who were victims of the county jail system, I assumed, were only getting the sort of treatment they deserved. Besides, it is hard to become really agi-

tated about injustices when all you know about them is what you learn from government documents and scholarly investigations of various sorts. Like most citizens, I never thought of prison as something that might involve me. We all may get involved in petty difficulties with the law if we drive too fast, or if we feel impelled to punch somebody in a belligerent moment; but most of us regard criminals, of the sort that would inhabit these county jails, as representatives of a world apart. We are only dimly aware of their existence. Within a few months of the time I'd written my article, I had pretty much forgotten about the problem.

And then, some time later — in the summer of 1947 to be more precise — I found myself being escorted into the jail of a county seat in southern Florida. I wasn't a reporter this time; I was a prisoner. The story of my arrest is not a happy one, and I prefer not to detain the reader with the details. But I would like, this time, to give the reader a vivid idea of what it is like to live in one of these jails. I am convinced now that my

THE AUTHOR of this article is a well known journalist who has lived and worked in Washington, D. C., and in the South. His story has been carefully checked by the editors.

other article, though it was entirely accurate, did not do justice to the subject.

At the time of my arrest I was staying in a convalescent home. I was horribly sick, and the doctors who were treating me had prescribed a regimen that included, among other things, complete rest and quiet. This did not impress the arresting officers, who took me out of the home without any delay, and put me behind bars.

For the next two days and nights I had violent convulsions and was unconscious most of the time. I owe my life to my fellow inmates, three of whom sat on me during my more violent attacks, and jammed a cloth between my teeth to prevent me from swallowing my tongue. They also made several pleas for me to get medical attention, which, I was told, the jailer dismissed with "let him have fits." It happened that my cell block was on the third floor of the jail, so that the jailer, whose office was on the ground floor, wasn't able to hear my ravings. I didn't disturb his sleep any.

On the third day, I began to come to and take stock of my surroundings. I was lying on an iron bunk in one of a row of eight cells, and was wearing only a pair of khaki shorts and a sport shirt. My first conscious movement was to reach into my hip pocket for my wallet. It had disappeared. Since I knew I had not been searched by the officers when I entered the jail, it was evident that the

Good Samaritans who had helped me through my convulsions had felt they should be paid for their efforts. I learned later that this assumption was correct.

II

There was a remarkable collection of male humanity in that jail. The "guests of the county," as we liked to style ourselves, included arsonists, burglars, automobile thieves, several men who had attempted murder, a convicted rapist (the only one of us in for life) and a few ordinary drunks. We also had two youngsters awaiting trial for breaking and entering who were under age, and should properly have been under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court. And finally there was one poor fellow who had been with us for almost four months without any charge having been made against him. He had been picked up drunk one day, with his wrists bleeding. Presumably he was being held for attempted suicide, but in all the time I was there no official charges were made against him and no hearing was held.

When my stomach felt as though it might be able to hold a little food, I began to make some inquiries about the prison diet. My first questions were answered with derisive hoots and some rather nauseating similes. I was told that a self-respecting hog would turn up his nose at the stuff, and that the prisoners were able to eat it only because they were kept perpetually famished.

We had two meals a day, at 7 A.M. and 3 P.M. Breakfast consisted of a mess of lumpy grits drowned in grease, one fried egg, a slice of bread (without anything to spread on it), and one cup of black coffee. Dinner, if the afternoon meal could be dignified by that word, was composed of a hunk of sowbelly, some beans, black-eyed peas or cabbage, and a couple of pieces of soggy corn bread. There was nothing to drink except water. On Thursdays and Sundays these meals were improved a little: we got hot-cakes and syrup in the morning, and meat loaf and rice in the afternoon. We came to look on Thursdays and Sundays as real festival days.

It is amazing what the human stomach can put up with. After I had been in jail a week or so, I was not only able to eat this food without gagging, but I was actually fighting for more than my share. The only way to get extra rations was to take the portions assigned to a newly-arrived drunk, who was either unable to defend himself or too sick to think of food. This "surplus" food was the origin of a good many brawls among the prisoners.

It began to dawn on me after a while that the food situation inside the jail was the result of a neat little racket. The county was allowed one dollar a day to feed each prisoner, and from what I knew about the cost of food in southern Florida it was obvious that only a small part of that dollar was being spent on us. Taking everything into account, including

the fact that the food cost nothing to prepare — it was cooked by Negro trustees, and the gas and electric bills were on the county taxpayers — my estimate of what was actually spent came to about \$.18. Other prisoners, who had been there longer and given more thought to the matter, considered my figure far too high. Let us be more than fair, however, and assume that only \$.80 was missing. With an average of nineteen or twenty prisoners in the jail, this made the total amount of money not accounted for more than \$15 a day, and more than \$100 a week.

It was the consensus of opinion inside the jail that this money was split between the sheriff's office and the jailer. We could not positively prove this, but we did know that the sheriff was making more arrests than were necessary to preserve law and order, and that the jailer was keeping men in prison longer than he had a right to. It was always easy to get into the county jail and always hard to get out of it. The inference seemed to be obvious.

III

As the days went by I began to find it amusing, as well as pathetic, to observe the antics of newly-arriving prisoners. Virtually all of them were drunk and innocent (or so they claimed), and the drunker they were the more they were innocent. All of them assured us that they would be out in a few hours, usually because they had important connections; and

when they did get out, they said, they were going to beat the god damn sheriff to a bloody pulp. Awful tortures for the arresting deputy and the jailer were also speculated on at some length by these men.

The only trouble with all these schemes was that once a prisoner was escorted to the cell block on the third floor, he would be unable to get to a telephone. He had no way of contacting a lawyer, of notifying his friends and family, or of raising bail. Occasionally the jailer could be cajoled into making a phone call — it seemed to depend on how his liver was feeling — but such instances were rare. If the victims didn't happen to have enough money on them for bail at the time they were arrested, or if they didn't think fast enough to make a phone call before being incarcerated, they were sunk. They would have to spend days, or even weeks, in the jail just waiting for their cases to come up for hearings. Meanwhile, they were each worth \$.80 a day to the sheriff and the jailer.

This particular jail was considered one of the best run in Florida. Nevertheless, the prisoners would not have had any difficulty in thinking up a few changes that might have been made for the better. For one thing, they would have felt more comfortable if physical checkups had been given to incoming "guests." An arrested man might have tuberculosis, a venereal disease, or any other communicable sickness, but the authorities would nevertheless put him right

in with the other prisoners. Medical attention was virtually non-existent, and the chances of an epidemic breaking out in the jail were always fearfully great.

Furthermore, the cells were overrun with cockroaches, ants, sand fleas and mosquitoes. Occasionally, if we pleaded hard enough with the trusties, we could get them to lend us an insecticide sprayer, but we were never able to do more than discourage the bugs temporarily. Anyway, the windows were not screened, and any mosquitoes we were able to dispose of were quickly replaced from the outside. To keep the cells and "bull pen" clean we had only one lopsided, be-draggled broom, a few dirty cloths, and an occasional mop. It was a hopeless task.

The county was supposed to supply each man with reasonably clean bed-clothing. A few of the privileged old-timers did get their mattress covers and sheets laundered once a week, but the rest of us slept on linen that hadn't been cleaned in months, and most of us didn't even have mattress covers. During the summer months, when the heat in this part of Florida is almost unbearable, our bunks gave off a horrible stink that permeated the entire cell block. To make matters worse, there was no cross-ventilation at all inside the jail, and we were never let outside.

Any prisoners who could get their hands on extra cash were able to live a little better. The trusties were

willing, for a price, to make purchases for us. This was another racket. For \$.50 they would get us a quart of milk, and for \$.25 a pack of cigarettes or a sandwich. Since most of this food came from the prison commissary it cost the trustees nothing, and the prices they got from us, which were high to begin with, represented a clear profit. We got liquor from time to time in the same way. The price in this case was usually about twice what it was on the outside. By giving the trusty \$5 you might get a pint of cheap blended liquor delivered to you, but you wouldn't get any change. As a matter of fact, you could consider yourself lucky if the trusty didn't just pocket your money and forget about the liquor. If he did that, there wasn't much you could do about it.

IV

The rackets, however, were by no means monopolized by the prison authorities. Certain of the inmates had effective techniques for extorting money from their fellow-prisoners, and these techniques were practiced with great resourcefulness and ingenuity. The principal racketeers among the prisoners were "Johnny" and "Chicken," the two under-age burglars. (Several victims of "Chicken's" tender ministrations stoutly maintained that the latter part of his nickname had been omitted.) These two youths constituted themselves the "victimizing," or "rolling," committee, and since their activities were

abetted by several of the old-timers, particularly an obese, repulsive Indian with the build of a wrestler, their committee operated with a high degree of success. The pair worked in one of several ways. If an incoming prisoner was too drunk to know what he was doing, he was promptly and efficiently "rolled," *i.e.*, relieved of his valuables and dumped on his bunk. If he was belligerently drunk, he was drawn into an argument and provoked into saying something which one of the boys would take as an unforgivable insult to his honor. At this point the "Chief" (the Indian) would intervene in the discussion by pinioning the victim's arms behind him while the two youngsters slugged him into unconsciousness and took his money. A newcomer in fair possession of his faculties would receive yet another kind of treatment. "Chicken" and "Johnny" would play up to the man and invite him to share their cell. The boys would then extract what money the man had by pretending they would purchase food and supplies for him. If he still seemed reluctant to part with his cash he was simply beaten up.

The jailer and sheriff never took much interest in this extortion, and certainly made no attempt to do anything about it. Only once when I was there was any official action taken. This was when a sergeant from a nearby Army Air Field, who had managed to get himself released in a few hours, objected to giving up \$5 that had been taken from him as

"club dues." The chief deputy came up to our cell block and took the money back.

"The club" had been in operation for some time when I arrived at the jail. Everyone had to join, and the initiation fee was \$5. For this money you were theoretically entitled to free Bull Durham tobacco, razor blades and an occasional piece of writing paper. The "officers" kept up a pretense that they were running a benevolent society of some sort, but actually, of course, "the club" was just another racket. The men who collected the money smoked the best cigars and got extra food from the jail's kitchen, while the rest of us had to roll our own and depend on outside contributions to supplement the beans and grits.

Getting contributions from outside was not something you could count on, even if you had generous friends and relatives anxious to help you out. All letters and packages were opened by the jailer, and there was nothing to prevent him from helping himself to anything that appealed to him. Prisoners used to complain regularly that money and packages which they knew had been sent to them were not received. In my own case — I checked after I got out — I know that at least three packages sent to me by friends had been stolen. But even if packages were delivered to you more or less intact, you didn't have much chance to keep most of what you got. Every prisoner in the jail learned about the package as soon as it was delivered;

and since you had no place to hide anything, you either had to stay in your cell all the time or carry the stuff around with you. On one memorable occasion I received two cartons of cigarettes, a can of Spam, half a pound of cheese, a quart of milk and some jelly rolls. I quickly drank the milk, ate the rolls and gave away half the cheese as "protection." Nevertheless, I lost six packs of cigarettes and the Spam. They were lifted when I stepped out of my cell once to go to the latrine.

v

In one way, the jail presented a peculiar paradox. It was stoutly built and kept in good physical repair. And yet a resourceful man could have escaped without too much trouble. The reason was that the jailers were almost incredibly lax in their precautionary measures.

We had two main types of prisoners in the jail: the ordinary county prisoners and the men from the city jail. The jail in the nearby city was badly overcrowded, and so we used to take some of the surplus inmates from the city, put them to work during the day, and then return them at night for safekeeping. These men invariably brought in cigarettes, candy, food, and sometimes liquor. Since they were never searched, it would have been just as easy for them to slip in a gun. Most of these city prisoners were not interested in escaping, since they were in for short terms, but some of the county in-

mates would have given a lot to get hold of a gun. A man with a gun could have escaped pretty easily. He would only have had to wait until the jailer escorted some new prisoner into the cell block, and then stick the gun in the jailer's ribs.

We did have one escape while I was there, though it was engineered in an entirely different manner. Every Sunday afternoon a group of missionaries led devotional services inside the cell block. I rather doubt that any of the inmates received much spiritual improvement from these sessions, but they did at least help to while away some time, especially since the missionaries usually brought along a guitar player who had a fair voice.

At the conclusion of the usual services one Sunday, a prisoner calmly walked out with the religious group. This man was a comparative newcomer in the jail. He had kept pretty much to himself and no one had paid much attention to him. But after his escape, the jailer counted the missionary party as it came in, and made sure that it was the same size when it left.

The prisoners were both naïve and vicious. One white-haired old man told us blandly that he had once managed Gene Tunney, and that he was on intimate terms with Jack Dempsey and a number of war heroes; and that he himself had a combat record of heroic proportions. He also claimed to have made several fortunes in dealings with Wall Street tycoons.

He was in jail for failure to pay alimony.

Another, who claimed to be a major in the Army Air Forces, portrayed himself as an idealist and muckraker. He told us in great detail how such business enterprises as the American Tobacco Company, Standard Oil, the huge grocery chains and other outfits were mulcting the public through nefarious dealings. He also exposed to us some scandalous practices engaged in by the Army during the war, which, if his story were true, should have merited the attention of G-2 and the FBI. He was an Irishman and a smooth talker, and actually had some of the men believing his line. He had been locked up for passing bad checks, was also wanted in New Jersey, and had been in difficulties with the law eight times before. While I was there he was bailed out by his relatives, but in a few months he was back in the same jail, this time charged with grand larceny.

Another self-invented personality evidently believed the rest of us could not add or subtract. He professed to be 26 years old. But at various times he told us that he had spent four years in California prisons and two years in the merchant marine; that he had recently sold a night club in California for half a million dollars; that he had traveled a million miles working as a truck driver; that he had been around the world a couple of times; and that he had been kept by numerous beautiful women for periods ranging up to a year. Not having

much to do, I figured out once that if everything he told us was true, he must have begun his career at least ten years before he was born. He was in for robbery, but none of his girl friends showed up while I was there.

Some of the prisoners seemed to be proud of their records, and spent a great deal of time detailing the "raps" they had beaten. This sort of talk was not as naïve as it may sound, for a hardened criminal was looked on as "con-wise" by the rest of us, and usually ran less risk of being robbed by his cell-mates. The naïveté of some of these men was, however, pointed up by their tastes in entertainment. The favorite reading matter was detective magazines — despite the fact that in these stories the criminal always gets caught. The most popular radio program was the show called *Gang Busters*. Some of the men enjoyed pointing out what they considered to be factual errors in the program, and enumerated the strategic mistakes committed by the criminals whose lives were dramatized. Close personal association with these big shots of the underworld would often be claimed.

VI

For a long time after I left that jail I found it difficult to resume a normal life. I found it hard to trust my associates even in the most trivial business relationships. When I was in jail I swiped cigarettes, wangled for myself food that I had no right to, and committed numerous petty crimes that

would never even have occurred to me on the outside. I still jump when my doorbell rings unexpectedly, or when I meet a policeman.

I think that this reaction to prison life is fairly normal. In general, it all goes back to the callousness and brutality of the treatment prisoners receive from their jailers. Men who learn that they cannot expect to be dealt with honestly by their "superiors," invariably, I believe, begin to acquire habits of deceit and roughness, partly out of self-protection. This also accounts for the way the prisoners treat one another. When you believe you are being imposed on, and can't strike back at your tormentor, you naturally lash out at the nearest available victim. It's not long before you begin to think, talk and act like a hardened criminal.

This attitude of suspicion and distrust is reinforced in prison by the lack of news from the outside. When you are shut off from the world you get so that you can believe almost anything. Once the clerk of the court and the chief deputy sheriff paid me a visit to tell me that my bride of a few months had been helling around in Palm Beach with soldiers, and that she had been drinking so much she was now confined in a hospital with DTs. They also wrote to my wife to tell her that I was being furnished with extra food by a local prostitute, and that I had sold all her belongings to buy liquor for myself. Both of these malicious reports were complete lies. But when you are isolated from your

friends and family you can believe almost anything.

The worst act of callous brutality I witnessed in that jail was the treatment of "Pops." He was a very old man, 86 by his own admission, and he had been thrown into the jail for no other reason than the fact that he didn't like the Old Folks Home, and had wandered away from it.

"Pops" couldn't stomach the food at the jail, and he was rapidly wasting away. As a special concession, the county allowed him one quart of

milk a day. That was practically all he consumed, and he didn't always get that. No bottles were allowed in the jail (broken glass makes a good weapon), so "Pops" could get his milk only when one of the trustees happened to be around, and felt like filling the old man's cup.

It won't be a very long time before "Pops" dies, if he is not dead already. He will not be the first man in that institution to die from malnutrition, lack of medical attention, and all-around callousness.

PHRASE ORIGINS—42

WEASEL WORDS: Such words are especially in vogue at election time. They are designedly ambiguous and qualified, and the politician spouting weasel words is equivocating and straddling the fence. Theodore Roosevelt popularized the phrase in 1916 in a speech attacking President Wilson's stand on universal military training. Later, he explained the origin of the phrase as he had used it: "Thirty years ago," he said, "I knew an old guide and he told me about the habits of the weasel. If you placed a weasel alongside an egg, he told me, the weasel would bore a hole in it and suck out all the meat. That was exactly what President Wilson did. He favored universal training for military service, but not compulsory service. He used words in favor of a good thing, but he sucked all the meat out of them by the words which followed his declaration."

MORRIS ROSENBLUM



WATCH OUT FOR

COLDS should be treated *promptly!* They often occur when body resistance is low, due perhaps to insufficient sleep, lack of fresh air, improper nutrition, or exposure to changes in weather. The cold may lower resistance still further and, if neglected, may lead to influenza, pneumonia or other infections.

WINTER AILMENTS

INFLUENZA, while more serious than a cold, is not usually dangerous in itself. It may, however, weaken the system and pave the way for other illnesses. Fortunately, there is a new vaccine which has been used with considerable success against certain types of influenza. The doctor may recommend this vaccine if an epidemic threatens, if a person suffers from frequent colds, or if poor physical condition makes influenza a special danger.

PNEUMONIA is still a serious disease that calls for prompt diagnosis and treatment. The sulfa drugs and penicillin are highly effective in most cases, but they must be given early for best results. Your doctor now has a vaccine which provides protection against many of the most common types of pneumonia. One type of this disease, *virus pneumonia*, does not respond to the vaccine, sulfa drugs or penicillin. Although seldom fatal, it should have immediate medical attention.

The best protection against winter ailments is keeping in good physical condition. If you catch a cold, try to get all the rest you can, eat lightly, drink plenty of liquids, and cover your coughs and sneezes so that you will not infect others.

IF FEVER ACCOMPANIES A COLD, CALL A DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY!

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TO VETERANS—IF YOU HAVE NATIONAL SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE—KEEP IT!

THE VOICE-TEACHING RACKET

BY R. G. McDODD

IF THE United States continues to turn out good vocalists, it will not be because of the voice teachers. This active and growing body of business people has actually contributed much toward ruining the American larynx, though certainly not intentionally. To read some of their advertisements — “Beginners to highest artistic perfection”; “Many pupils in opera, concert and radio”; “Member of X Society”; etc. — you might think these voice teachers were persons of remarkable ability. The fact is that among the “maestros” and “voice authorities” who line the highways and byways of this country, perhaps one in ten does no damage to a student’s vocal cords and one in a hundred really knows what he is talking about.

Voice teaching is one of the easiest professions to slip into. No Federal, state or municipal license is required. It is not necessary to be a graduate of any reputable music school or prove adequate training. Nor can anyone call a voice teacher to task for gross ignorance or incompetence. And the profession pays well — far better, for instance, than school teaching, which

requires a diploma from a recognized teachers’ college.

Equipped with little more than obscure accompanying experience or a quick glance at some outmoded book on singing, thousands of shysters now dominate a highly specialized field without let or hindrance. Ex-church organists, ex-hoofers, piano coaches, broken-down *verein* “artists” and ex-nobodies of all sorts have become voice “experts” overnight. There is no check on the baseless encouragement and far-fetched rewards held out to the suckers, who number an estimated 2 million. Some of them cause no more harm than what is involved in mere tonsil-tickling. Others have been responsible for the rupture of blood vessels in the throat and permanent or temporary degeneration of the voice.

What makes this state of affairs possible, aside from the indifference of legislators and the general public is the immense gullibility and ignorance of the hordes who seek quick riches and fame in professional singing careers. Coming from offices, shops, farms, the smaller cities, ambitious poor homes and social-climbing mid

R. G. McDODD is himself a voice teacher, who has been practicing that profession for close to twenty-five years in New England. He has not heretofore done any writing.

dle-class ones, where escape from drudgery or emptiness has its goal-end in a lucrative, glittering firmament, each is convinced he is the one fated to succeed against staggering odds. Most are musically illiterate, unable to distinguish one key from another. Starting at the average age of twenty, when an instrumentalist is usually finishing his musical education — which includes, in addition to high skill on a main instrument, proficiency on a secondary instrument, courses in solfège, theory, composition, history of music and related subjects — beginning voice students are not fazed even by ignorance of the rudiments. They are, they believe, destined to shine; and the “right” teacher will supply them with what they need to get by on. A vast majority have no musical talent to begin with, though without this talent even the most beautiful voice is doomed to grief. Some are actually tone-deaf. But few can envision any obstacle which may not be dreamed away.

The amazing thing is that the more unsuited he is for a singer’s career, the more desperately willing is the dupe to grasp at straws, to shop around for encouragement, to find somebody in whom he can place “confidence.”

Here is where the charlatan comes in. Inspiring confidence is his stock in trade. “Do you aspire to opera, my dear? The concert stage? I believe you have what it takes.” No voice is too wobbly, foggy, asthmatic, abra-

sive or hopeless for him to tamper with. Having won confidence, he is free to dispense his sketchy — often dangerous — knowledge at a premium. Confidence comes high. Rates for voice lessons range from \$5 to \$25 per twenty minutes to an hour.

Often the better part of a week’s wages or the profits from papa’s little business go for the futile lessons. For who can begrudge, say, a measly \$25 a week when it can all be made up in a single night with a \$2500 recital fee or on the Bell Telephone Hour, at a reputed \$5000?

II

How does the unscrupulous teacher attract the sheep in the first place? By ambiguous advertising, mouthing esoteric phrases, a colorful character, infiltration — anything that can be suggested by human versatility.

One poseur, now considered among the most “reputable” in his community, established himself by laying down a barrage of atmosphere. One of the personality boys, he oozed a theatrical continental manner and exaggerated the accounts of his insignificant past on the concert stage. Before you could say quack, he had acquired the pick of the town’s pupils. He promised every applicant the moon. Each was destined “in a few years” to supplant his or her famous prototype. His studio became filled with future Meltons, Traubels, Ponses, Munsels and Pinzas.

He assured one pupil in particular, a lad of twenty, with no inherent

musicality and the merest wisp of a tenor (which soon developed a tremolo wide enough to drive a team of horses through), a star spot at the Metropolitan Opera by the time he was 24. Cramming was ordered full-steam ahead. Two weekly lessons were supplemented with sessions by an assistant, dramatic and repertoire coaches and a piano teacher — each of whom was suspected of making a kickback. Shortly before the four-year period was up, young “Caruso,” who had steadily been getting worse, was dismissed from the studio on some flimsy pretext. His mother, seeing her son practically whisked from behind Met footlights, wept copious tears. Her prayers for re-instatement were finally arrogantly granted. The fourth year ended with nothing further said about the Metropolitan, with which the teacher had never had any connection. The lessons continue, however, the mother carries an extra handkerchief, and the father, a small haberdasher who had begun to question the whole matter, has ceased his grumbling.

The “maestro’s” other future greats have supplanted nobody and are not likely to. Nor can he point to one voice which has not retrogressed under his training. Yet, far from being denounced as unethical and a fraud, he is more firmly entrenched than ever. His haul is now approximately \$1000 a week.

Then there is the “bolstered” approach, in which a teacher makes up for his obscurity by claiming associ-

ation with high-sounding organizations. A recent advertisement of one individual listed membership in three professional music societies. The reader inferred that certain standards were upheld by these bodies and that, for the good of the profession, every applicant was investigated before being admitted to membership. A search in the telephone directories of ten large cities failed to disclose that even one of the societies existed. After another search for the advertiser’s street address (only the city was given), an inquiry was sent to her for information concerning the headquarters and objectives of the societies. Stamped and self-addressed envelope was enclosed. There was no reply.

Another form of bolstering is the practice of courting friendship with reputable instrumentalists and being seen with them publicly. Instrumentalists are notoriously contemptuous of singers and their ilk, whom they regard as shallow musicians at best. Ergo, to be known as the friend of a fine instrumentalist is tantamount to having a clean bill of health. It is also not beyond some to claim credit for the entire training of a gifted, well-schooled pupil, well on the road to success, who has blundered into the studio only a short time before.

One of the most subtle come-ons is the offer of a contract calling for a cut of the pupil’s future earnings. The implication that there will be future earnings is enough for the sucker. Instead of being appalled by the teach-

er's manifest avariciousness, he is flattered. Meanwhile, lessons must be paid for.

Catch-phrase advertising, for the more simple-minded, is also extensively employed. "Only Bel Canto Method Taught"; "Microphone Technique"; "Direct Contact with Motion Picture Studios"; etc. Bel Canto is not a method — it is a desideratum. It means "beautiful song" and was popularly applied to the Italian masters of beautiful singing of a bygone generation, principally Enrico Caruso. Microphone technique can be learned in a matter of minutes. It is not a substitute for voice training and is of value only to the radio singer or performer in places where public address systems are used.

And anyone who has had the slightest experience in attempting to place a singer, especially of the student grade, in motion pictures knows how well-nigh impossible it is to break in from the outside. Paid studio scouts hunt new material mainly in musical comedies and revues and even then are interested only in youngsters who "stop the show." After that — agents, screen tests, special coaching and *maybe* a contract. The poorly equipped waif hasn't a ghost of a chance against the competition of exceptional professionals.

The time-honored "scholarship" device is still good for results. This usually brings dozens of the unsuspecting, each of whom invariably qualifies on a partial-payment basis

which may be as much as or more than the regular fee. It is also a common practice among certain choral directors to pressure members to study with them, the gimmick being a chance to solo.

One leader of a prominent choral group in a metropolitan city went so far as to publish his need for soloists each year in the free music columns of newspapers. This suave operator held auditions in an impressive studio rented for the day and gave hope to nearly all applicants while casually pointing to some imperfections. He even discussed performing fees. But not one deal could be closed. Follow-up letters brought no response except to those who caught the hint: they had to be willing to polish away imperfections under his expensive guidance. Either his elaborate ritual nailed as many pupils as he could handle, or there were too many threats of exposure.

III

The foregoing is only a sampling of the shoddy methods which have condemned the entire voice teaching profession in the eyes of the public. Honest teachers do exist. And however small a minority they are, both they and the two million persons who pay for voice lessons are entitled to protection. The honest teacher will be the first to admit that his incompetent and unethical brethren have sunk teaching to the level of a racket and made *every* practitioner suspect. Unaided, he can no more

combat the widespread evil than a handful of private citizens can halt inflation by themselves.

What is needed is legislative action. Licensing would cut down malpractice to a great extent. Each state should have a board of examiners which would disqualify all but those able to prove adequate preparation as cultivators of voice. Diplomas from reputable music schools would be recognized. The boards would appoint research groups to formulate standards. And, as in the medical profession, which allows distinctions between general practitioners and specialists, voice teachers might even be graded.

Finally, musical aptitude tests should be required of all prospective voice students. College entrance boards, subscribed to by many leading universities, pass on the worthiness of applicants for higher education. Similar bodies could be set up for judging the eligibility of candidates for voice

education. The board would send results to the licensed teacher to whom the candidate had applied. Acceptance would then be predicated on recognized suitability instead of the prevailing hogwash. Unfit material would be protected from ruthless bilking and sent on its way, or perhaps directed to a more appropriate field. Aptitude tests would also be a double-check against teachers who might be tempted to exploit a license.

This is merely a suggested *modus operandi*. Other plans may be more effective. But obviously, some plan which calls for public protection is in order.

Conservative appraisals fix half a billion dollars as the annual sum spent in the United States for voice cultivation. The profession should be compelled to clean house and become respectable. Without rigorous controls enacted by lawmakers, it will remain a half-billion dollar racket.



WOMEN ARE HOUSEHOLD SLAVES

BY EDITH M. STERN

HELP WANTED: DOMESTIC: FEMALE. All cooking, cleaning, laundering, sewing, meal planning, shopping, weekday chauffeuring, social secretarial service, and complete care of three children. Salary at employer's option. Time off if possible.

NO ONE in her right senses would apply for such a job. No one in his right senses, even a desperate widower, would place such an advertisement. Yet it correctly describes the average wife and mother's situation, in which most women remain for love, but many because they have no way out.

A nauseating amount of bilge is constantly being spilled all over the public press about the easy, pampered existence of the American woman. Actually, the run of the mill, not gainfully employed female who is blessed with a husband and from two to four children leads a kind of life that theoretically became passé with the Emancipation Proclamation. Its confinement makes her baby's play pen seem like the great open spaces. Its hours—at least fourteen a day, seven days a week—make the well known sunup to sundown toil of

sharecroppers appear, in comparison, like a union standard. Beside the repetitious, heterogeneous mass of chores endlessly bedeviling the housewife, an executive's memorandum of unfinished business is a virgin sheet.

Housewifery is a complex of house-keeping, household management, housework and childcare. Some of its elements, such as budgeting, dietetics, and above all, the proper upbringing of children, involve the higher brain centers; indeed, home economics has quite as respectable an academic status as engineering, and its own laboratories, dissertations and hierarchy of degrees. Others of its facets, and those the most persistent and time-consuming, can be capably handled by an eight-year-old child. The rôle of the housewife is, therefore, analogous to that of the president of a corporation who would not only determine policies and make over-all plans but also spend the major part of his time and energy in such activities as sweeping the plant and oiling machines.

Industry, of course, is too thrifty

EDITH M. STERN, who dissected "The Miserable Male" in the November *MERCURY*, is the author of *Mental Illness: A Guide for the Family and other books dealing with various aspects of domestic problems. She is herself a struggling housewife.*

of the capacities of its personnel to waste them in such fashion. Likewise, organized labor and government afford workers certain standardized legal or customary protections. But in terms of enlightened labor practice, the housewife stands out blackly as the Forgotten Worker.

II

She is covered by no minimum wage law; indeed, she gets no wages at all. Like the bondservant of another day, or the slave, she receives maintenance; but anything beyond that, whether in the form of a regular "allowance" or sporadic largesse, is ruggedly individualistic. Indeed, paradoxically, the more service she renders, the more hard labor she performs, the less munificent are her rewards! Which is the more likely to get a new fur coat: the housewife who does her own washing, lugs her groceries from the chain store and makes all the children's clothes, or she who patronizes a commercial laundry, markets by telephone and shops at Modes for Moppets?

No state or county health and sanitation inspectors invade the privacy of the home, as they do that of the factory; hence kitchens and domestic dwellings may be ill-ventilated, unsanitary and hazardous without penalty. That many more accidents occur in homes than in industry is no coincidence. Furthermore, when a disability is incurred, such as a bone broken in a fall off a ladder or legs scalded by the overturning of a kettle

of boiling water, no beneficent legislation provides for the housewife's compensation.

Rest periods are irregular, about ten to fifteen minutes each, a few times during the long day; night work is frequent and unpredictably occasioned by a wide variety of factors such as the mending basket, the gang gathering for a party, a sick child, or even more pressing, a sick husband. The right to a vacation, thoroughly accepted in business and industry, is non-existent in the domestic sphere. When families go to beach bungalows or shacks in the woods Mom continues on almost the same old treadmill; there are still little garments to be buttoned and unbuttoned, three meals a day to prepare, beds to be made and dishes to be washed. Even on jolly whole-family motor trips with the blessings of life in tourist camps or hotels, she still has the job considered full time by paid nurses and governesses.

Though progressive employers make some sort of provision for advancement, the housewife's opportunities for advancement are nil; the nature and scope of her job, the routines of keeping a family fed, clothed and housed remain always the same. If the male upon whom her scale of living depends prospers, about all to which she can look forward is a larger house — and more work. Once, under such circumstances, there would have been less, thanks to servants. Currently, however, the jewel of a general houseworker is virtually ex-

tinct and even the specialists who smooth life for the wealthy are rarities.

Industry even has a kind of tenderness towards its women workers that is totally lacking towards women workers in the home. Let a plant employee be known to be pregnant, and management and foremen, who want to experience no guilt feelings toward unborn innocents, hasten to prevent her doing any kind of work that might be a strain upon her. In the home, however, now as for centuries, a "normal" amount of housework is considered "healthy" — not to mention, since no man wants to do it, unavoidable. There may be a few proscriptions against undue stretching and heavy lifting, but otherwise, pregnant or not, the housewife carries on, turning mattresses, lugging the vacuum cleaner up and down stairs, carrying winter overcoats to the attic in summer and down from it in the fall, scrubbing kitchen and bathroom floors, washing woodwork if that is indicated by the season, and on her feet most of the time performing other such little chores beside which sitting at an assembly line or punching a typewriter are positively restful.

Despite all this, a good many arguments about the joys of housewifery have been advanced, largely by those who have never had to work at it. One much stressed point is the satisfaction every good woman feels in creating a home for her dear ones. Well, probably every good woman

does feel it, perhaps because she has had it so drummed into her that if she does not, she is not a good woman; but that satisfaction has very little to do with housewifery and housework. It is derived from intangibles, such as the desirable wife-husband and mother-child relationships she manages to effect, the permeating general home atmosphere of joviality or hospitality or serenity or culture to which she is the key, or the warmth and security she gives to the home by way of her personality, not her broom, stove or dishpan. For a woman to get a rewarding sense of total creation by way of the multiple, monotonous chores that are her daily lot would be as irrational as for an assembly line worker to rejoice that he had created an automobile because he tightens a bolt. It is difficult to see how clearing up after meals three times a day and making out marketing lists (three lemons, two packages of soap powder, a can of soup), getting at the fuzz in the radiators with the hard rubber appliance of the vacuum cleaner, emptying wastebaskets and washing bathroom floors day after day, week after week, year after year, add up to a sum total of anything except minutiae that laid end to end reach nowhere.

III

According to another line of unreasoning, the housewife has the advantage of being "her own boss" and unlike the gainfully employed worker can arrange her own schedules. This

is pure balderdash, despite the fact that she may suit herself about such minor matters as whether she is going to make the beds in the morning or let them go until the afternoon, elect Thursday rather than Friday for closet cleaning. If there is anything more inexorable than children's needs, from an infant's yowls of hunger and Junior's shrieks that he has just fallen down the stairs to the subtler need of an adolescent for a good listener during one of his or her frequent emotional crises, it is only the pressure of Dad's demand for supper as soon as he gets home. "The show must go on" is not nearly so urgent as "the home must go on"; there is no understudy, and many a housewife drags through her performances in a state of semi-invalidism that would send any gainfully employed man or woman to bed on sick leave. What is more, not her own preferences as to hours, but those set by her husband's office or plant, by the schools, by pediatricians and dentists, and the children's homework establish when the housewife rises, when she goes forth, and when she cannot get to bed.

Something else makes a mockery of self-determined routines; interruptions from the outside world. Unprotected by butler or doorman, the housewife is at the mercy of peddlers, plain or fancy Fuller brush; odd-job seekers; gas and electric company men who come to read meters; the Salvation Army in quest of newspapers; school children hawking needs or tickets or chances; and repair men

suggesting that the roof is in a hazardous condition or household machinery needs overhauling. Unblessed with a secretary, she answers telephone calls from insurance and real estate agents who "didn't want to bother your husband at his office"; vendors of cemetery plots and portrait photographs. The doorbell invariably rings when she is two flights up cleaning the attic, or staunching a flow of blood from little Mabel's knee; the telephone, when she is snatching a hasty bath between changing the baby's diaper and putting on the pot roast. All such invasions have a common denominator: the assumption that the housewife's time, like that of all slave labor, has no value.

In addition to what housewifery has in common with slavery, there are factors making it even less enviable as a way of life. The jolly gatherings of darkies with their banjos in the Good Old Days Befoh de Wah may be as mythical as the joys of housewifery, but at any rate we can be sure that slaves were not deprived of social intercourse throughout their hours of toil; field hands worked in gangs, house servants in teams. The housewife, however, carries through each complex operation of cooking, cleaning, tidying and laundering solo; almost uniquely among workers since the Industrial Revolution, she does not benefit by division of labor. Lunch time, ordinarily a pleasant break in the working day, for her brings no pleasant sociability with the girls in the cafeteria, the hired

men in the shade of the haystack, or even the rest of the household staff in the servants' dining room. From the time her husband departs for work until he returns, except for an occasional chat across the back fence or a trek to market with some other woman as childbound, housebound, and limited in horizons as herself, she lacks adult company; and even to the most passionately maternal, unbroken hours of childish prattle are no substitute for the conversation of one's peers, whether that be on a high philosophical plane or on the lower level of neighborhood gossip. The Woman's Club, happy hunting ground of matrons in their forties, is perhaps a reaction against this enforced solitude during earlier married life.

Something else enjoyed by slaves, but not by housewives, was work in some measure appropriate to their qualifications. The more intelligent were selected as house servants; the huskier as field hands. Such crude vocational placement has been highly refined in industry, with its battery of intelligence and aptitude tests, personnel directors and employment counselors. Nothing of the kind is even attempted for unpaid domestic workers. When a man marries and has children, it is assumed that he will do the best work along lines in which he has been trained or is at least interested. When a woman marries and has children, it is assumed that she will take to housewifery. But whether she takes to it or not, she does it.

IV

Such regimentation, for professional or potentially professional women, is costly both for the individual and society. For the individual, it brings about conflicts and frustrations. The practice of housewifery gives the lie to the theory of almost every objective of higher education. The educated individual should have a community, a national, a world viewpoint; but that is pretty difficult to get and hold when you are continually involved with cleaning toilets, ironing shirts, peeling potatoes, darning socks and minding children. The educated should read widely; but reading requires time and concentration and besides, the conscientious housewife has her own five-foot shelf of recipes and books on child psychology to occupy her. Most frustrating of all, education leads one to believe that a project attempted should be systematically carried through to completion. In housewifery there is inevitable hopping from one unrelated, unfinished task to another; start the dinner — get at the mending — collect the baby — take down the laundry — finish the dinner is about the maximum height of efficiency. This innate incoherence of housewifery is like a mental patient's flight of ideas; nothing leads quite logically from one thing to another; and the woman schooled like her husband to think generally and in sequence, has a bad time of it intellectually and emotionally as a result.

Perhaps even more deplorable is the loss to society when graduate nurses, trained teachers, lawyers, physicians, artists and other gifted women are unable to utilize their prolonged and expensive educations for the common good. Buried in the homemade cakes the family loves, lost among the stitches of patches, sunk in the suds of the week's wash, are incalculable skilled services.

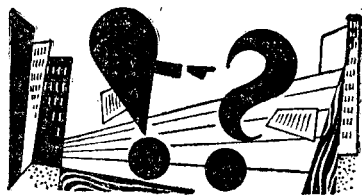
But just as slaves were in the service of individual masters, not of the community or state or nation in general, so are housewives bound to the service of individual families. That it devolves upon a mother to tend her children during helpless infancy and childhood — or at any rate, to see that they are tended by someone — is undeniable. But only a psychology of slavery can put women at the service of grown men. Ironically, the very gentlemen scrupulous about opening a door for a lady, carrying her packages, or helping her up onto a curb, take it for granted that at meal-times, all their lives long, ladies should carry their food to them and never sit through a meal while they never get up. A wife, when she picks up the soiled clothing her husband

has strewn on the floor, lugs his garments to the tailor, makes his twin bed, or sews on his buttons, acts as an unpaid body-servant. If love is the justification for this rôle, so was love a justification for antebellum Mam-mies. Free individuals, in a democracy, perform personal services for themselves or, if they have the cash, pay other free individuals to wait on them. It is neither freedom nor democracy when such service is based on color or sex.

As long as the institution of housewifery in its present form persists, both ideologically and practically it blocks any true liberation of women. The vote, the opportunity for economic independence, and the right to smoke cigarettes are all equally superficial veneers over a deep-rooted, age-old concept of keeping woman in her place. Unfortunately, however, housewives not only are unorganized, but also, doubtless because of the very nature of their brain-dribbling, spirit-stifling vocation, conservative. There is therefore little prospect of a Housewife's Rebellion. There is even less, in the light of men's comfortable setup under the present system, of a male-inspired movement for Abolition!



THE SOAP BOX



EDITORIAL NOTES

Shop Talk. Several writers' magazines and newsletters have recently printed misleading or confusing information about the requirements of the *MERCURY*. One such periodical, for example, stated that in the realm of fiction we accept "almost anything up to 3000 words." The implication that any kind of fiction is suitable to these pages, and that length is our only criterion, is obviously absurd, and we have asked the periodical in question to make the necessary correction. The best place to learn about the requirements of the *MERCURY* is the pages of the magazine; and if there is still any doubt about the suitability of a manuscript for us, the best thing to do is to query the editors — or to send in the manuscript. . . . A young man, who obtained a Ph.D. in English literature at a well-known university less than thirty miles distant from this office, called in person to inquire whether there was an opening on the editorial staff. During his conversation he informed the editor interviewing him that he had read no

American writing since the days of William Dean Howells, and "I can't say that his work is of any great moment." He went on to boast that he had never really read any of the works of Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Conrad Aiken or Thomas Wolfe. The editor expressed some surprise, to which the young Ph.D. replied, "After all, a university is not a journalistic marketplace." For a while our editor felt somewhat depressed by this exhibition of brash ignorance and snobbishness, and began searching about in his mind for a few unflattering observations on the life of the academic grove. But then he recalled that a sub-editor of a distinguished literary magazine, now unhappily defunct — the magazine, that is — once boasted to a colleague that he did not like fiction or poetry! . . . A soft-spoken woman called recently and insisted that she be connected with a responsible editor, for, she claimed, she had something "extremely important for the magazine" to relate. She was connected with an editor. At once the woman launched into a tirade against all our medical articles, on the

ground that "medicines are the work of the devil. All drugs are poison and are the root causes of the diseases that afflict mankind. We must rely on nature, especially water, sleep, vegetables, and frequent 'dorsal' massage." The harassed editor listened to about fifteen minutes of this talk, and after repeated futile efforts managed to stop her with the promise that he would look into her ideas. She promised to send a great deal of "really enlightening and revolutionary literature," which unfortunately she did. Most of it seems to be published in Kansas. What's the matter with Kansas? . . . The number of letters reaching us, commenting upon the contents of the magazine, is tremendous. We have reason to believe that it is probably greater than that received by any other magazine in our class. Because of this, we always have the problem of choosing which letters to publish in "The Open Forum." We try to give every point of view a fair hearing. We welcome all correspondence and are very grateful to the men and women who take the trouble to write, but we would like to remind them that, if they wish to see their ideas in print, they stand a better chance if they make their communications as brief as possible. All other things being equal, the shorter the letter the more likely it is to be published. A good length is about 150 words. . . . With this issue the MERCURY dons a type cover and a square-back binding. The new cover will tell readers at a glance the contents of the magazine, and the

new binding will make it easier to read and conserve each issue. We are planning further changes and additions, both typographical and editorial, and they will become manifest in the near future. . . . This issue does not contain the brilliant reappraisal of Rutherford B. Hayes, by Wenzell Brown, which we had announced would appear in January. And we have had to postpone publication of a very able profile of Puerto Rico, by Alida Malkus, which is the sixteenth in the MERCURY series on the states and possessions. Both of these articles had to be omitted because of a shortage of space. But we promise that Mr. Brown and Mrs. Malkus will tell their stories in our February issue.



We refrain from making any comments upon what happened on November 2, except to remind our readers that plenty happened. Our sole interest, at the moment, in November 2 lies in the fact that as a result of what the people did at the polls many new faces will appear in both the House and the Senate. We would like very much to have profiles of the more colorful of them, and it would please us particularly if, among the people who submitted such profiles, were new writers. The door of THE AMERICAN MERCURY is always wide open to men and women who are just breaking in to journalism. The only prejudice we have is in favor of young men and women who have judgment,

are willing to work hard, and have a friendly acquaintance with the English language.

PUBLIC OPINION AND THE PRESS

When I went to college the professors of politics and sociology insisted that newspapers never reflect public opinion. I was never quite certain whether to believe this—at least never until this election. This election is the fifth straight in which the vast majority of the papers supported the losing candidate. Obviously, they did not reflect the opinions of their readers. Then whose opinion did they reflect? Yes, I know a lot of people are asking this question. But why doesn't somebody answer it satisfactorily? I think it's extremely important for the welfare of a democracy that there should not be so wide a gap between what the people think and what the publishers and editors of newspapers think. Can it be that publishers and editors are conducting their editorial pages for one another?

CHESTER P. MONATH

St. Louis, Mo.

POINT OF BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

The other day, for a reason that still makes no sense to me, I started reading Genesis, and was astounded at a glaring contradiction right at the very beginning. In chapter I, verse 27, it is written: "So God created man in

his own image, in the image of God created he him." But in chapter II, verse 7, it says: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground. . . ." Now, God clearly is spirit. In chapter I man is made a spirit, while in chapter II he is made a material substance, because dust, of course, is non-spiritual. I'm sure theologians have noticed this before it dawned on me, and I would like to know how they answer this apparent contradiction. I would ask my own pastor, but I haven't been to church for ten years; I prefer to sleep Sunday mornings. Only my wife and two children go.

P. M. U.

Santa Fe, N. M.

THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE

I have noticed that Boston is the only city in the country where "ball" refers to a whisky highball. I am a traveling man, and I have asked for "balls" in Chicago, Kansas City, San Francisco, and dozens of other places, but only in Boston did the bartender know what I wanted. And when I say Boston, I mean Boston literally, for in Cambridge and Lowell and other suburbs of Boston, the bartenders are as ignorant of the meaning of "ball" as are the bartenders in the other cities I have mentioned. How did the use of "ball" ever get started in Boston?

JAMES O. TENNEY

Newton, Mass.

ARABS AND JEWS ARE COOPERATING

BY HELEN WARREN

IN VIEW of the heated debates, controversies, hysteria and war over Palestine, the little village of Abu Gosh, lying sleepily in the Judean hills about six kilometers from Jerusalem becomes curiously interesting and significant. Abu Gosh, an old Arab village, is at present the site of a unique neighborliness. There are about five hundred Arab villagers. There is a French monastery connected with an old Crusader's church and all its attendant personnel of fathers, monks and nuns. There is also a headquarters camp for the Palmach, which is the striking force — guerrillas and commandos — of the Israeli Army. These three varying cultures, Moslem, Christian and Jewish, are living and working peacefully together in complete amity and co-operation.

The Arabs of Abu Gosh have always been a kind of maverick group in the intensity of their friendship for the Jews. Some of them actually joined the Jewish extremist groups in the period when these small dissident bands were carrying on terror

raids against the British. This year, when the Arab armies started to advance on the Jews, the Abu Gosh villagers were reluctant to leave their village as they were ordered to by the Transjordan Arab Legion. Also, encouraged by the Christian fathers, who admonished them not to raise a hand against their Jewish friends and neighbors, they refused altogether to enlist in the Arab armies or in any way to cooperate in the fight. They stayed in the village until the Legion started to bomb it in order to force them to leave. (The flight of innocent Arab civilians was to be used as a weapon against Israel.) Under fire the villagers finally fled, but not too far, so that when the Israeli Army should conquer that territory, which fact they never doubted, they might return easily. Their faith was justified and now over half of the original Arab inhabitants of Abu Gosh are living there, with more returning every day. They now support themselves by selling the produce of their little farms to the Jews for the markets in Jerusalem, and

HELEN WARREN is a former actress who is now devoting all her time to writing and lecturing on Palestine. She spent some time in postwar Germany, where she helped to arrange passage to Palestine for some of the Jewish displaced persons. In addition to numerous magazine articles, she has written *The Buried Are Screaming*, published recently by Beechhurst.

many of them have volunteered to serve with the Israeli Army.

Under the present circumstances Abu Gosh is unique, but actually, in the past, there was never a desire on the part of the average Arab to fight the Jews. Quite the contrary: the two peoples have a history of neighborliness and friendship. One of the most succinct expressions of the feeling of the Palestinian Arab on the "Palestine problem" was delivered to me some years back in an Arab restaurant in Jerusalem. Between mouthfuls of *humos* and *kebab* (salad and meat dishes), I discussed the possibility of partition with the Arab waiter. "Sure, I believe in partition," he said, and added quickly, "so long as I can live in the Jewish section."

In many of the cities, workers from both peoples have been laboring together side by side. They even speak each other's language. The Arabs speak Hebrew, and Arabic is taught in the Jewish schools. The Arab taxi-drivers in Jerusalem startle foreigners in Palestine by their command of the Hebrew language.

In the farm and rural areas they have been extending a helping hand to each other, like farmers all over the world. And in each of the Jewish settlements in the desert in the Negeb there would stand a guest tent at the entrance, in the best Bedouin tradition, like a welcome mat for roving Arabs in the neighborhood. There the coffee would brew and there, when the Bedouins came to call, as

they often did, the talk would be small talk, not of war and fight, but of weather and kinfolk, and how hard it is to scratch a living from desert soil.

In 1946, in the Huleh section, which lies very close to the Lebanese border, I had an illuminating conversation with the *mukhtar* (leader) of a small Arab village. He was a small, colorful-looking man, in western trousers and shirt, with a typical Arab headdress wound around his head and hanging down his back. I had been invited to pay him a visit. The traditional coffee was prepared, which always takes a long time; it is ground by being beaten in a carved wood mortar and pestle, then cooked with very special and delicate spices over a fire of camel dung. During this process I entered into a discussion with my host. His son, who was on vacation from his studies at the American University in Beyrouth, served as an interpreter for us.

"What is the actual trouble between the Jews and yourselves — will you explain it to me?" I asked him.

When the question had been translated for him a wry smile crossed his face as he answered, "There is no trouble between the Jews and ourselves. The trouble is only in 10 Downing Street." His face took on a more serious aspect as he continued, "As a matter of fact ever since the Jews have come in numbers there are no more riots between the Lebanese Arabs and ourselves. You see this

land we are on — this belongs to Lebanese landlords. They are never here. They do not work it but we cannot buy it. We have only leases. For many years — in my father's time, the same thing. Our landlords want as rent for the land a very large percentage of the produce but it has been difficult to scratch a living from this land, and we have not been able to pay such a heavy toll to them, so naturally we have tried to steal a little — one must live. As a result they have hired Lebanese Arabs to come here and beat us up to get all that they demand. Therefore we have always had trouble here, fights and riots between ourselves and the Lebanese. Since the Jews have become our neighbors we have learned so much from them about tilling the soil and getting more from the earth that we reap a much bigger harvest every year and we can steal as much as we want from our landlords — and still they are satisfied, and we are satisfied, because everyone has so much more now than before." He ended in a burst of contented laughter.

"But how would you feel if hundreds of thousands of Jews were to come into Palestine right away?"

He smiled again and shook his head at my persistence. "What are they, cannibals, these Jews, that I am supposed to feel something?" he demanded. "They are not wild men from the jungle. They are civilized people. There is plenty of room for all of us."

Today, despite the fact that numerous Arabs in Palestine fell prey to the scare propaganda hurled at them by the Mufti and the neighboring states, and fled Palestine, many of them left the keys to their homes as well as all their possessions in the safekeeping of close Jewish friends. Friends, like one, Ezra, who has not only served as godfather to many an Arab child and sheltered many a son who had got into a blood feud, but was often called upon by his Arab friends to serve as arbitrator of disputes among themselves. Today also, looking toward peace in the future, the Tel Aviv rotary club continues to keep its absentee Arab memberships alive and on the rolls, and today in the country the Jews are working the Arab farms and keeping strict accounts for their absent neighbors.

Often the Palestinian Arabs have done more than exhibit mere displays of friendship for their Jewish friends. They have been active collaborators against those whom they considered the common oppressors. Under the British mandate, not only did they send expressions of sympathy to Jewish settlements which had been persecuted for one reason or another, but they hid and sheltered Jewish underground leaders from the British. They would disguise these leaders as Bedouins when they were being hunted, and would keep them safely in their little villages. They also helped in the underground immigration. There was

a notorious incident in which a Jewish immigrant ship, loaded with refugees, had managed to elude the British, and a group of Arabs helped in landing the "illegals" in the Arab city of Jaffa and refused to accept any money for their service.

This fall in a little desert village near Rosh Pinah a Bedouin sheik summed up the reasons for Arab-Jewish collaboration under the mandate in the following way: "On Saturday," he began, his eyes twinkling inside the circles of blue paint he had drawn around them, "the British would promise the Jews everything. On Sunday they would promise the Arabs everything. And on Monday they would take everything for themselves."

Since the British have left Palestine there is still further collaboration on the part of those Arabs who voluntarily remained in what is now the state of Israel. During a recent trip there I visited the Jewish settlement of Maoz on the Transjordan frontier. An Israeli theatre group had come to the settlement to perform for soldiers and pioneers. It was a hot night and the stage had been set out-of-doors by laying planks of boards on bales of hay pressed tightly together. There were at least 1500 Israelis lounging about the lawn in front of the stage, absorbed in a new play about Palestine.

During the performance a soldier came and sat on my left. Unconsciously I turned to look at him and found myself staring into the smiling

face of a young Arab. I had a moment of panic as I looked at his rifle and cartridge belt, but as he made himself comfortable on the grass and prepared to enjoy the performance in Hebrew I realized that there was not going to be a riot or trouble of any sort, that this was one of the Arabs in Israel fighting with the Israeli Army.

Among the Arabs in the Israeli armed forces there are whole tribes of Druzes. The Druzes are the most literate of the Arab tribes in Palestine, and their villages are cleaner and better kept than the rest. As I went through the Druze village of Dalia, I was surprised to be hailed on all sides by children and adults with the Hebrew greeting *Shalom*, which, translated literally, means "Peace." I stopped to pick up a young man in uniform who wanted a lift to the next Druze town along the road, the town of Ushia. He spoke no English, only Hebrew or Arabic. My driver served as interpreter and I learned that he was on short leave, which he had earned on the front lines, from the Haganah, the Israeli Army, and that he was bringing greetings to his family from his two brothers, who were also volunteers with the Israeli Army. It was getting dark when we dropped him in Ushia. I saw a flash of fine white teeth in a dark face under a turban and heard a grateful *Shalom* as he turned to make his way across the hill to his father's stone hut, a Sten gun made in Israel swinging from his shoulder. In the most recent battles in Galilee the Druzes have

been fighting magnificently side by side with the Jews, and most of their fighting units use Hebrew in their orders.

III

In the Haganah also are Arabs from the north of Palestine. There are sheiks in Eastern Galilee who, infuriated by the invasion of the Syrian Arabs, went to the Israeli Army not only for protection, but also to offer their men an opportunity to fight what they consider to be a foreign attempt to deny self-determination to the Palestinian Arabs.

There are other Arabs who are collaborating with the Israelis solely from a sense of deep gratitude. In a military camp in the Negeb I was surprised to see a thirsty Arab and his camel being fortified with water by a group of Israeli fighters. They explained that he brings them information about the enemy for which he refuses any other kind of payment. He has an almost religious feeling of thankfulness for the water pipeline which was brought to the Negeb. His loyalty to the Jews springs from the fact that the pipeline was extended not only to the Jewish settlements, but that great pain was taken to open it in all the little Arab villages as well, in one of which he used to dwell before the Egyptian invasion of the Negeb.

One of the most interesting facets of the relationship between Arab and Jew is the occupation of Arab cities and villages taken by the Israeli

forces. The occupation by the Israeli Army has, on the whole, been extraordinarily lenient. However, this leniency on the part of the Israelis has only been made possible by the willing cooperation and friendliness of the occupied Arabs. The 21,000 inhabitants of Nazareth, for instance, have neither the desire nor the motive to fight the Jews. Quite peacefully, thousands of young, able-bodied men and women stream through the streets and the market place. The few Arabs from the town actively engaged in the fighting fled, and at least 6000 Arab refugees flooded the city, seeking refuge with the Jews. Nazareth is one of the few Arab cities in which there was some semblance of a democratic election for the officers of the city. Under the Israeli occupation the Arab mayor and his council of five, four businessmen and one lawyer, all of whom had been elected by the people previous to the war, have been retained for the administration of the civilian population and liaison with the army.

The mayor, in an interview with me, explained the indifference of the young people of Nazareth to the foreign Arab propaganda, while his council of varying ages and different religions, some Moslem, some Christian, sat beside him nodding agreement to his words: "Our people have no desire to fight with the Jews. Before the war most of them took a bus each day to Haifa to work together with Jews in Jewish industries. They have no purpose to take up

arms against them now. They have always been good friends with them."

In and around Haifa there had been thousands of Arabs who had been members of the Histadrut (the Jewish Federation of Labor in Palestine). Many of the workers of Nazareth had been among these. Ties such as this one, around which so much of their lives had been built, were far too strong to be suddenly and artificially broken, and therefore we find the paradoxical spectacle in some sections of Palestine of willing and peaceful cooperation between the occupied and the "conquerors."

IV

The Israelis who are responsible for the administration of the occupied Arab cities are carefully chosen for this task. Most often they are Jews who have not only lived in close proximity to the Arabs for many years, speak their language and generally understand them well, but who are also people from the collective settlements. This is a very important factor in their backgrounds for such a job. Through the kind of community living which exists in these settlements they are usually free of petty personal greed and selfishness. Living as they do, the amassing of private property or possessions means nothing to them. They have learned to divorce themselves from this type of vanity and conceit, so normal in other societies. They have a deep sense of social justice, also born of the cooperative way in which they live in

their settlements, and quite naturally, having a history of suffering from it, they loathe and detest oppression of any sort. Consequently, the Arabs, especially in Nazareth, Acre, Abu Gosh, etc., have not been subjected to shabby treatment, and have suffered hardly at all from looting.

They have been scrupulously taken care of. They are treated medically by staffs of Israeli doctors. Every day, in those cities and villages where it is needed there is a food convoy from Tel Aviv. It is hard to appreciate what this means unless one understands the food situation in that city. The people of Tel Aviv have no meat. They are permitted three eggs a week for children, and none at all for adults. In the streets of the city the housewives discuss interminably the problems of feeding their families. They never tire of asking one another the same question over and over again, after lining up in front of the food shops: "Were you able to get some potatoes today?"

The distribution of the food to the Arabs is carried out fairly. In Nazareth, where there had been a small food reserve when the Israeli Army came in, only a few of the influential Arabs were getting any benefit from it. Today the food is shared equally, and the allotments are carefully supervised. I watched the distribution of sacks of flour one day, and noted that there was both an Israeli soldier and an Arab civilian, standing side by side, checking on each portion.

In the economic sphere there is

strong concerted action to put the Arab civilian back on his feet. The marketplaces are busy and are run completely free from interference by the Israeli authorities. The little shops are open, and small private industries have been put back into operation and are supplying employment. I asked the council in Nazareth how they felt they were progressing economically in that community. One of the business men, who wore a bright red fez with his well cut tweed suit, answered for all of them.

"You know, two things we always need, can always use — more food and more money. But little by little we are working things out so that they are not too hard. We are working together. We have, for instance a cigarette factory here. The army helped us to reopen it and then handed it back to us altogether. We have people working there and already earning their bread for themselves once more. However, the cigarettes we produce are very expensive — there are not enough wealthy Arabs left in the country to buy them. Therefore the Israeli Army is helping us further by buying all that we can produce for the soldiers."

Another member of the council spoke enthusiastically about a water pipeline that the Israel government plans to lay in Nazareth. This would be the first one in that city. Heretofore the water has been carried by hand. Usually it is the women who go to the wells and fetch the water in large jugs for their households. One

of the most beautiful and picturesque of these wells is the legendary and haloed "Mary's Well," from which the mother of Christ is supposed to have drawn water in those ancient days. The new pipeline would be an untold blessing. Not only would there be more water, and better sanitary and hygienic conditions in the city, but the project will use large groups of workers who can become self-supporting on some decent standard of living.

In all the occupied sections of Israel there are newspapers in Arabic for the civilians. The Arab workers have been encouraged to organize new labor unions. There are no regulations against free assembly, and large crowds gather in meetings in the streets or buildings, either for idle gossip or constructive discussion, without supervision by the occupying authorities. Except for a curfew at night, and the fact that Arabs are not permitted to travel, as yet, between cities, there is very great freedom.

All the holy places, both Arab and Christian, are guarded and protected. The sacred shrines bear signs in Hebrew admonishing the soldier: "Holy place. Entrance forbidden." The Israeli Army is not taking any chances on the lay curiosity or natural souvenir-hunting of the average soldier of any nationality. Thus the Arabs have complete freedom of worship in Israel.

The general rehabilitation plans for the country include the Arab refugees now in Israel. These refugees are still

in a very bad position. They have not been really assimilated into the Arab communities into which they have come. While some buildings have been taken over for them, their conditions are very poor — crowded and foul with filth and smells. There is still no real organization amongst them. Each person looks out only for himself. In the rooms it is a case of who came first and took what he could grab. There are some refugees living with private families. However, the municipality pays for this service from these families. The reconstruction plans embrace a possible renewed birth of life for these Arabs as well as the others. There are already plans under way for rebuilding the roads, for creating new industries in the neighborhoods of the Arab cities, for reconverting old factories, and for large housing projects, all of which would supply employment for the idle labor and create real opportunities for an escape from poverty and degradation. The Arab worker will find the chance of sustaining himself with some degree of dignity and self-respect.

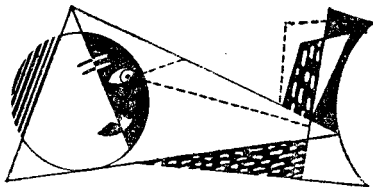
Never before in the Arab history

have they experienced what we know as the western democratic form of government, guaranteeing personal freedoms. The Arabs coming into contact with the living experience of democratic concepts for the first time in Palestine have been stimulated and impressed. The background of this war in Palestine does not lie in the average Arab's supposed antipathy for the Jew. It lies in the greed and lustful opulence of the foreign Arab lords, and their attempts to maintain the status quo, politically and economically, in the Middle East; it lies in Great Britain's desperate efforts to preserve her empire and, through the Negeb, to keep an open corridor from the Mediterranean across Africa to all her military bases on that continent. Without foreign interference, Arabs and Jews in Palestine would be at peace and could create governments friendly and cooperative to each other. One thing is certain: that, no matter what the final outcome will be in Palestine, the wealthy *effendi*, or foreign adventurer and imperialist, will find it difficult to bring the average Arab back down to the level on which he left him before this war.



THE SKEPTICS' CORNER

by BERGEN EVANS



*That a fluff of cotton on the
screen door will keep flies away*

Mr. G. B. Shaw has remarked that there seems to be a law of the conservation of credulity; the dispelling of one illusion seems only to leave a vacuum to be filled by a new one.

Despite the fading of many an old superstition new ones seem always at hand. Two or three years ago the idea that a fluff of cotton tied on the screen door would keep flies away spread like wildfire through Ohio, southern Indiana and northern Kentucky. Perhaps it was even more widespread, but in that area fluffs of cotton were to be seen on thousands of screens. When questioned the users were vehement in their insistence that it worked — though now that it has fallen into disuse the same users are at a loss to explain why they have abandoned it. At the height of the vogue many explanations were offered: it was because the cotton looked like a spider's web or a wasp's nest and frightened the flies away; it moved when the door was opened and "they're afraid

of things that move"; it looked like snow and they thought it was winter.

Vance Randolph (in *Ozark Superstitions*) says that when bananas first began to appear in village stores in the Ozarks folks got the idea somehow that a banana stalk hung up in the chicken house would rid the whole place of chicken lice, and that one still occasionally finds one of these stalks hanging in an outbuilding.

*That Florence Nightingale was
the first woman to nurse wound-
ed soldiers*

Miss Nightingale made nursing respectable. She gained an accepted status for it and by her love of order started its way to its present professional state. But she probably drove more women off the battlefields than she brought to them. Soldiers used to take their wives and consorts along with them. Women — many of them virtuous, devoted wives — formed a large part of the camp followers that swarmed in the wake of earlier armies. They performed domestic services for

their men until battle was joined, sought them out on the field if they did not return and nursed, bewailed or avenged them on the injured of the enemy as the exigency demanded and the occasion offered.

That "doggone" isn't profanity

The old chest-swelling, gut-casing, soul-jeopardizing profanity of our fathers has sunk into monotonous, monosyllabic whining. We haven't the time or the convictions for real ob-jurgation. Most of what passes for profanity is what Burges Johnson in *The Lost Art of Profanity* calls "Deaconic" swearing, such cowardly substitutions as "Cripes" for "Christ" and "darn" for "damn."

Among these ersatz execrations none is more common than "doggone," but those who by its use seek to titter their way past the recording angel rest in a false security. The use of "dog" as an anagram for "God" has been recognized for centuries as the most horrible of blasphemies, and even if there is no Day of Reckoning there are always the contemptuous smiles of unbelievers who are devout enough to speak their "God damns" straight.

That it is so many degrees "in the sun"

Those who add to the burden of a hot day by continually informing us that the temperature is such and such "in the shade" always imply that, ac-

tually, it is much hotter but that they, in order to be conservative, have chosen the coolest reading they could find.

Mr. A. S. E. Ackermann (in his *Popular Fallacies Explained and Corrected*, p. 886) points out that a thermometer in the shade gives the true temperature of the surrounding air. A thermometer in the sunshine, however, records the temperature at which the air is losing heat as fast as it is receiving it, and that is dependent upon many factors. By screening a thermometer in the sun in such a way as to prevent the loss of heat by conduction he was able to obtain a reading of 250° F. at a time when a similar thermometer suspended in the sunlight in free air registered only 85° F.

That Manhattan Island is getting top-heavy and will sink into the ocean one of these days

Million-footed Manhattan swarming about its day's business little realizes that in the calmer hinterlands a fate as dramatic as Babel's or Gomorrah's is being predicted for it. But many rural prophets have warned (nay, anticipated!) that one skyscraper too many will be built one of these days and the whole insolent, un-American, ungodly mass will topple into the Atlantic.

That the God of the outlands doesn't approve of Manhattan is highly probable, but if He's plotting this particular nemesis He has failed

to inform himself of some of the basic facts of modern construction. The material excavated to make room for the foundations of a skyscraper weighs more than the building, sometimes twice as much. Immense and massive as they seem to the visiting provincial, modern buildings are actually thinner than eggshells in proportion to their size. They are bubbles of stone and steel and glass. And buildings of the future, whose concrete may be made of expanded perlite or vermiculite, will be lighter still.

That heretics were burned to death because their sin demanded an unusually cruel punishment

On the contrary, the faggot was esteemed a peculiarly *merciful* death. The actual inquisitors — as some apologists are still willing to inform us — never put anyone to death. They just condemned certain people as heretics and then turned them over to the civil authorities with the request that they should be punished “as mildly as possible and without the effusion of blood” (*“Ut quam clementissime et ultra sanguinis effusionem puniretur”*). And it was a desire to please the holy fathers in the item of not shedding blood that led the civic authorities to use fire, for a good searing, as every housewife knows, keeps in the juices.

More to be dreaded than a Greek bearing gifts is a fanatic bearing mercy. The Circumcelliones, a sect of primitive Christians (or, rather, a

primitive sect of Christians), used, Tillemont informs us, to beat those who differed from them to death with large clubs — because the Bible forbade Christians to take up the sword!

That Cleopatra dissolved a pearl in wine to drink Marc Antony's health

A secret admiration for the misbehavior of “the ne’er lust-wearied Antony” has led the righteous to cherish the memory of his revelries with the Serpent of Old Nile for two thousand years. Among the couple’s mythical misdeeds none is more famed or more persistent than the story of Cleopatra’s dissolving a large pearl in a cup of wine in order to drink Antony’s health in prodigal luxury. The act has become a symbol of reckless ostentation and apparently is still regarded by many as a custom among the decadent affluent. Thus a Mr. Spicely, a chef, speaking over WGN (June 17, 1948) on the “Speak Your Mind” program spoke his mind freely against this foolish and expensive European custom and expressed a strong personal preference for the unjewelled vittles of the good old U.S.A.

Experiments by the curious (and wealthy!) have shown, however, that it takes several days to dissolve out the mineral constituents of a large pearl even in the strongest vinegar (see *Notes and Queries*, March 4, 1916, p. 198) and even then the organic matrix remains.

WHEN EDITORS WERE MEN

BY WAYNE GARD

IN THE frontier town of Austin, when much of Texas was still a fenceless buffalo range and almost every man carried a six-shooter, the editor of the *Southwestern American* had a peculiar but effective method for insuring his freedom of expression. When he saw a stranger approaching his office, he had a reporter go into an adjoining room and poke a Winchester barrel through a small hole in the wall, taking close aim at the visitor. If the man proved to be friendly, the rifle was quietly withdrawn; but if he became wrathful or obstreperous, the editor had only to point to the protruding muzzle to cool him off.

Similar precautions were taken by another Texas editor, J. Guy Reid, who published a little weekly at Cotulla and once was wounded in a gun battle. Reid had a habit of popping off in print at people he didn't like and on one occasion he referred to a sheriff as the offspring of a razorback hog sired by a ringneck buzzard. He kept an arsenal in his office and guarded against surprise visits by means of carefully placed mirrors and a device by which any-

one who entered would step on a mat and ring a hidden bell. When he went out into the street, he wore two pistols, a dirk and two pairs of brass knuckles.

Assaults on pioneer editors in the West were common enough to warrant such defense measures. James S. Reynolds, who started the *Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman* at Boise City in 1864, had a street encounter in the next year with a district attorney whom he had criticized in print. The lawyer pressed a pistol against the heart of the editor, who was unarmed. When he hesitated to shoot, Reynolds grabbed the gun, beat the attorney over the head with it, kicked him into the gutter, and resumed his leisurely walk down Main Street. Although Reynolds carried no firearms, he kept within reach in his office horse pistols and an assortment of wagon spokes, ax handles and iron bars.

In Kansas the editor of the *Medicine Lodge Cresset* kept a loaded pistol on the pine table he used as a desk. In Texas Albert Tyson, editor of the *Rising Star X-Ray*, boasted that he was a fighting editor with a

WAYNE GARD is an editorial writer for the *Dallas Morning News*. He has contributed many articles to the *MERCURY*, including "Sagebrush Justice," which appeared last April.

quick trigger finger. A contemporary, Alvin S. Peek, claimed that he had issued newspapers in nine states and territories and had shot eleven men who took exception to his editorial opinions. But Peek, at 51, died with his boots on. In Dakota Territory the *Bismarck Tribune*, which Clement A. Lounsberry established in 1873, had several shootings in its office; and one of its local editors came near being killed.

If the frontier editor didn't have a gun or a knife in his belt, he often had occasion for quick resort to some other weapon. A. T. Packard, who started the *Bad Lands Cowboy* at Medora, Dakota Territory, in 1884, made good use of the iron side-stick with which he locked up his page forms of type. He found this weapon handy one day when a butcher who had tried to carve a Chinese to bits came into the newspaper office to forestall any adverse report. In Lawrence, Kansas, in 1888, a young reporter, William Allen White, kept a baseball bat hidden beside his desk for defense and on one occasion carried two pistols in his pockets.

Sometimes, as in Peek's case, a bold newspaperman failed to be alert enough in his own defense. One notable victim was James King, editor of the San Francisco *Bulletin* in the lush days of California's gold rush. In his issue of May 14, 1856, King referred to James P. Casey, a local politician and ballot-box stuffer, as a former inmate of Sing Sing prison. Casey had admitted this fact in a

San Francisco court, and several of the papers had mentioned it. But when it cropped out in the *Bulletin*, Casey went to King's office and complained. King ordered him to get out and stay out; and that evening, as the editor walked home through fog and heavy traffic, Casey shot him, inflicting a mortal wound.

II

Instances in which a frontier editor paid with his life for the privilege of writing what he pleased were not rare. Even forty years after this San Francisco incident, political crusading was hazardous. In 1896 a Populist editor in Pearsall, Texas, made strong accusations against Democratic officials in Frio County and attacked the sheriff, a former Texas Ranger. Soon afterward he was shot to death in his office. In Waco two years later the brilliant but vitriolic W. C. Brann, editor of the *Iconoclast*, died from the bullets of a street assassin after he had refused to bow to the hard-shell preachers of his day. In the controversy in which he was involved, two brothers, J. V. and W. A. Harris, who edited a rival paper, had been shot and killed in the preceding year.

More than one western editor endured horsewhipping for his candor; and at Medicine Lodge, Kansas, the editor of the *Barber County Mail* so aroused the ill will of a faction of his readers that they ordered him to leave town. When he refused, they determined to tar and feather him. On finding neither tar nor feathers

at hand, they opened a keg of sorghum molasses, dumped into it a batch of sand burrs, poured the sticky mass over the editor's stripped body, and rode him out of town on a rail.

Most frontier editors were rugged individualists who delighted in making the type of caustic comment that provoked retaliation. Occasionally they took unfair advantage of their positions to air publicly their personal grudges against fellow-townsmen. In his issue for August 24, 1884, the editor of the Albany (Texas) *News* wrote:

The old crank that presides over the hotel on the south side of the square, who recently slandered another hotel and was soundly thrashed therefor, objected to our looking over his register this morning.

Often editors on the outer fringes of settlements engaged in wordy duels with one another in their columns. Some of these were put on for the entertainment of their readers; others were conducted in dead earnest. J. B. Cranfill, a Texan who established the weekly Gatesville *Advance* in June 1882, soon afterward had a narrow escape. While he was in a neighboring town attending to some business, his printer-partner took too many drinks and, while under their influence, wrote and published a highly libelous attack on the rival Gatesville editor, W. B. Scott of the *Sun*. When Cranfill returned and went to his rival's office to try to straighten the matter out, the two armed editors engaged in

a fight that might easily have been fatal.

A more continued Texas editorial duel was that between the Comanche *Chief* and the Eastland *Review* in 1878. In its issue for May 17 of that year the *Review* stated:

Boil down two or three curs and pour them in a mold the shape of a monkey. Take out as soon as cold, and you will have an animal similar in smell, form, and substance to the editor of the Comanche *Chief*.

To the west three years later a similar feud was carried on between the Santa Fe *New Mexican* and the Las Vegas *Optic*. On July 15, 1881, the *Optic* stated that the editor of the *New Mexican*

on each visit here borrowed twenty-five dollars from the editor of this paper to pay his hotel and whisky bills, and the last time he kept us out of our money for a full month. Subsequent developments assure us that we were more fortunate than many others in getting our money back at all. He's a stinker, and six months will conclude his residence in the Territory.

The next day the editor of the *Optic* was at it again. He asserted that his rival was called Granny "because of his feebleness of mind, his fickleness of purpose, and his fondness for fault-finding." He went on to call the *New Mexican's* editor a characterless wanderer; "a booby in intellect; a coarse-minded, foul-mouthed bankrupt who is in arrears to the men in Kansas who fed his family a number

of years for charity's sake; a depraved, lurking villain at heart who is a catspaw in the hands of designing men."

III

As a rule the frontier editor had little equipment, and often he turned out his first few issues before he had a building. In the initial issue of the paper he started at Newport, Wisconsin, Alanson Holly wrote:

We are printing the *Wisconsin Mirror* in the woods. Not a dwelling, except our own, within half a mile of us, and only one within a mile. The forest oaks hang over our office and dwelling, the deer and rabbits shy around us, and the partridges and quails seek our acquaintance, venturing near our doors.

Walter Colton, who helped establish the *Californian* at Monterey in 1846, thus described his partner, Robert Semple: "He is in a buckskin dress and fox-skin cap; he is true with his rifle, ready with his pen, and quick at the type case." At Olympia six years later the editor of the *Columbian*, the first paper north of the Columbia River, had to chop his firewood, sweep his floor, and do all his cooking, washing and mending, as well as his printing. In Idaho J. S. Butler, who started the *Boise News* during the Civil War, chiseled a chase from an old horseshoe iron, made tin composing sticks from a tobacco can, and split a pine slab to use as an imposing stone.

Newsprint habitually was scarce, and often the lack of it caused papers

to miss an issue or two. At Monterey the first issue of the *Californian* was printed on small sheets intended for wrapping cigars. In Denver the *Rocky Mountain News* sometimes used wrapping paper obtained from local stores. In Dakota Territory a snow blockade in the fall of 1873 forced the *Bismarck Tribune* to print several issues on wallpaper.

The initial issue of the *Kansas Weekly Herald*, at Leavenworth, was put out from the river levee on September 15, 1854, before the town's first house was completed. The editor, Osborn Adams, and his printer lived in tents, cooked their meals over log fires, and slept on prairie hay on the ground. Said this first issue:

All the type for the present number of the *Herald* has been set under an elm tree in the city of Leavenworth. Our selections have been made, our editorials written, our proof read, sitting on the ground with a big shingle on our knee for a table.

At Lawrence, Kansas, in the following January three newspapers were started in two buildings that for several weeks lacked roofs. Printers, with the help of a few settlers, had to fell trees, put up crude offices, and even make rough furniture. At Prairie City, in the same state, the *Freeman's Champion* was first issued on June 25, 1857, from a home-made tent. Initial issues of several Kansas papers came from dugouts, and that of the *Kansas News* at Emporia had its type set in a hotel bedroom. In 1860 an ambitious Ne-

braska editor published the *Huntsman's Echo* from an isolated log cabin on the Mormon Trail 150 miles west of Omaha and a few miles east of Fort Kearney. He complained that almost every day herds of buffalo trampled the town site and destroyed his garden and growing corn.

Nearly every frontier editor was an inveterate booster for his town. He knew that his own chance for success depended on the growth of the new community he had chosen; and he used much of his space to extol its climate, its people, its prospects, and the soil of the surrounding area. Often the editor was directly tied in with the get-rich-quick schemes of those who had town lots to sell, and usually he had put in a claim for a homestead. In many cases copies of papers with glowing praises for the new community were sent to prospective settlers living in eastern states.

Most western newspapers bore traditional titles borrowed from those of the older states, though occasionally there cropped up some such original and fitting name as that of the Tombstone *Epitaph*. Mortality among the frontier papers was high. Often a town acquired more papers than it could support, and the weaker ones had to fold. In other cases the town itself failed to survive, perhaps because some rival won a battle to become the county seat or to be on the line of a new railroad. When a publisher-editor saw that he had made a bad guess or that his town was hopelessly dwindling, he sometimes

moved to a more promising community.

Western Texas saw many such moves. The *Frontier Echo* was established at Jacksboro in 1875; but three years later, after that town had ceased to be an important shipping point for cattle, the paper was moved on west, to become the *Fort Griffin Echo*. After a few more years, when the Texas and Pacific Railroad was built through Albany instead of Fort Griffin and the military post was abandoned, the paper was shifted again and became the *Albany Echo*. Another Texas editor of that era hopped from Palo Pinto to Mineral Wells and thence to Albany, while still another went from Blanco County to Bertram and later to Burnet. An 1881 item noted that "the Coleman *Courant* has pulled up stakes and moved to Colorado City, the new and growing city on the Colorado River at the crossing of the Texas and Pacific Railroad."

Elsewhere in the West, shifts of this kind were equally common. In Wyoming the *Sweetwater Mines* was moved from Fort Bridger to the Pass when the snow melted in 1868, and a few days later was issued in South Pass City. In the fall it appeared in Bryan City but in the next spring was brought back to South Pass City. The most wandering paper of all was the *Frontier Index*, published by two brothers, Leigh R. and Fred K. Freeman. From its appearance in Kearney City, Nebraska Territory, in 1866 until its arrival at North

Yakima, Washington, it was issued from 25 towns. It was printed on an old hand-roller press that was hauled westward along the route of the Union Pacific Railroad. Often it was edited in a tent, a shack, a railroad car, or a hotel. Its publishers boosted the new railhead towns and did a big business in printing circulars aimed to attract settlers.

IV

So meager was the frontier newspaper's revenue from subscriptions and advertising that the publisher-editor often had to have some additional means of support, at least in the paper's infancy. At Iola, Kansas, the *Neosho Valley Register* was published by two practicing lawyers who advertised, "If legal assistance is desired, call at the *Register* office." One of the editors of the *Omaha Arrow* was a Mormon, J. E. Johnson, who supported his three wives by selling insurance, practicing law, and operating a store and a blacksmith shop. The editor of the *Nebraska Enquirer* explained the lateness of one issue by saying that he had been harvesting his wheat. Another western editor attributed his dearth of news to the fact that he had been gathering corn, fighting prairie fire, and building winter quarters for his livestock.

Many farmers paid for their subscriptions in grain, vegetables, meat, eggs, or firewood; and often furniture, clothing, or other merchandise was the only payment obtainable for local advertising. If the editor could

not use all the produce brought to his door, he had to scurry about to convert it into cash or swap it for something he needed. In Arizona the editor of the *Flagstaff Gem* advised subscribers that wood, turnips, potatoes, and corn in the shock were almost as welcome as cash. Another editor, after publishing a long list of items he would take for subscriptions, added that he would welcome almost "any other variety of produce except babies."

Harry P. Hornby, a Texas editor who often lacked the dollar to pay the express charge on a shipment of paper for his *Uvalde News*, took his honeymoon on railroad scrip and furnished his home with goods obtained from a San Antonio store in exchange for advertising. "One farmer friend," Hornby wrote in his reminiscences,

brought me 150 pounds of cotton seed to pay for his subscription. It helped to feed our cow. Honey was often exchanged, as well as peaches, pears, and other fruits. The most unusual exchange I ever received was a pint of rattlesnake oil. My subscriber told me it was good for rheumatism. It helped grease printing machinery.

The typical frontier paper devoted most of its news columns to brief personal items, many of them sent in by country correspondents. If a farmer suffered a fall from a horse, if his wife lost her chickens from cholera, or if his daughter went to town and bought a bridal dress—all this was grist for the editor. The papers reported weddings in detail,

often including a list of the presents. In Texas, G. W. Robson, editor of the *Frontier Echo* at Jacksboro, wrote up weddings with such flourish and with such compliments to the bride that it became customary to reward him with a big cake with white frosting. Another western editor put birth, marriage, and death notices under the headings: Hatched, Matched, and Dispatched.

Busy or lazy editors used their shears to fill some columns with stories, essays or poems from other papers. Some bought patent insides and thus had only half as many pages to fill. Medicine advertising was prominent in almost every paper. It paid a low rate but was welcome because the pay usually was in cash. A few local advertisements were well written, but often these lost much of their effectiveness by being run too long without change.

Except among the advertisements, illustrations were rare; but one Texas paper, the *Albany News*, attained distinction by having its news pages enlivened with pictures. Its editor, Edgar Rye, was adept at carving woodcuts with his pocket knife and illustrated many of his articles and editorials. He ran cuts of cattle barons interviewed, pictured an attempted bank robbery, showed the town marshal exterminating a den of skunks, and depicted defeated political candidates boarding a steamer to go up Salt Creek and drown their sorrows. Perhaps his most amusing picture was one based on the fact that

Albany had plenty of water but no whisky, while neighboring Cisco had much whisky but was short of water; this illustration showed Cisco people gazing longingly at the Albany water tank while swapping an express car full of hard liquor for a supply of clear water.

V

The staleness of much of their news seemed not to bother most frontier editors. An exception was A. T. Packard, editor of the *Bad Lands Cowboy*, who prided himself on punctuality. When he heard that two horse thieves were to be caught and hanged by vigilantes on a Thursday, the day his weekly came out, he was so confident that this plan would be carried out that he stated in his paper that the pair had been strung up. When he took a bundle of papers to the Medora railway station that afternoon to toss them on the west-bound train, he was startled to see step off one of the coaches the two thieves whose demise he had announced. But as the train started, the two hopped on again—and that night they were hanged.

Most frontier editors had little formal learning. In its issue of September 8, 1895, the Las Cruces (New Mexico) *Democrat* said editorially, "We can count upon the fingers of one hand the papers in this Territory edited by men whose education fits them for anything higher than herding pigs in a swamp." Yet the early West had some scholarly newspaper-

men. Thomas J. Dimsdale, who became editor of the *Montana Post* in 1864, had been well educated in England and was Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Territory. A. S. Mercer, who later edited several Texas frontier papers, was a college graduate who had been president of the University of Washington.

Many a noted writer got his start toward fame by working on some rugged paper in the West. In 1862, after making a fizzle as a miner, Sam Clemens began pushing a quill for the *Territorial Enterprise* at Virginia City, Nevada. When he left there, nearly two years later, he had made a reputation as a humorous writer under the pen name of Mark Twain. Bret Harte made his start in writing as a wandering newspaperman in the frontier West, and similar experiences in Arkansas gave Opie Read the local color for many articles and stories. Bill Nye earned a name for himself while editing the *Laramie Boomerang* in wild Wyoming.

Nye, who arrived in Wyoming in 1876 with 35 cents in his pocket, took a job on the *Laramie Sentinel* at \$12 a week. A few years later, with the backing of political friends, he established the *Boomerang*. He named the paper for his mule and filled it with fresh news and humorous comment. At the foot of the stairs he kept a sign: "Twist the gray mule's tail and take the elevator." His paper was a financial flop but won him national attention as a humorist.

The frontier newspaper was one of

the most effective influences in taming the western wilderness, bringing order out of social chaos, and establishing schools and courts. Frequently the pioneer editor served on a vigilance committee that quietly hanged local horse thieves. As the country became more settled, he was likely to become postmaster, mayor, a county officer, or a member of the legislature. A few with outstanding qualifications were made governors or congressmen.

One of these, George L. Curry, who had printed his *Free Press* on a crude press he made of wood and scrap iron in 1848, became a territorial Governor of Oregon, 1854-59. In 1896, Idaho voters sent a Caldwell publisher, Frank Steunenberg, to the Governor's chair and elected a Populist editor from Boise, James Gunn, to Congress. Plainsmen who stepped from newspaper desks to political posts included Sen. H. C. Hansbrough of North Dakota, Governors Robert W. Furnas and Samuel McKelvie of Nebraska, J. Sterling Morton, a Nebraskan who was Grover Cleveland's Secretary of Agriculture, and several Kansans: Gov. John A. Martin, Senator Preston B. Plumb, Governor and Senator Henry Allen, Rep. Victor Murdock, and the former Governor and veteran Senator, Arthur Capper.

As such men discarded buckskins for store suits and left the pistols off their belts, more than a few carried nostalgic memories of days when the smell of printer's ink was smothered by that of gun smoke.

DOWN TO EARTH

by ALAN DEVOE



EVERYONE A NATURALIST

THERE is a great deal of good counsel offered these days in books and magazines to the effect that all of us should cultivate some interest outside our regular business or occupation: some interest in which we can become absorbed in our spare hours and which can take us, so to speak, outside ourselves. Going to an occasional sports event, listening to the radio or watching a television screen, reading a little now and then . . . things like this, after all, are thin and inadequate ways of trying to fill up and round out our lives and give them a sustaining quality and a continuousness of interest. We need to cultivate some special interest in which we can satisfyingly use our minds, and to which we can devote ourselves with a real and continuing enthusiasm, and to which we can turn for complete vacation from the routine of business or housework or whatever in which we are all too easily imprisoned.

The good counsellors who make this recommendation are of course quite right. A married man and woman, who take no greater excursions outside themselves than an occasional turning-on of the radio or an occasional watching together of a movie, are both likely to feel frustrated and confined, and to express these obscurely entertained feelings by an everlasting wrangle. It is notorious that the business or professional man, who has confined his whole interest to his business or profession, is likely not to survive his retirement for very long. Ennui, expressing itself *via* heart or kidneys or arteries, drops him in his tracks. The physical organism has no reason to go on continuing. It is equally notable that men devoted to hobbies and similar interests have a way of continuing into great old age, still lively and alert and inquisitive as chipmunks.

All very well, then; we should have an outside interest that can absorb us and keep us refreshed. But what?

A great many interests, from col-

lecting Japanese prints to cultivating exotic flower-gardens, have the drawback of being expensive. A great many other interests have the drawback that they require their devotee to be in certain special kinds of places or to keep available certain special times or seasons. There are interests that can be indulged only when the strength of the legs is good or money is plentiful, or eyesight is keen, or under the terms of some similarly strict requirement. The man who devotes himself to any of these interests may find himself, by an act of circumstance, suddenly as deprived and forlorn as the dedicated businessman who has been obliged to retire.

There ought to be an interest free of these hazards. Happily, there is. It lies open to everyone to be a naturalist.

A drudging housewife who is seldom able to leave the kitchen can be a naturalist. A paralyzed man who cannot stir from his bedroom or his wheelchair can be a naturalist. A man of ninety can be one; a boy can be one; there are no conditions that can interfere more than trivially with the lives of naturalists.

11

To be a naturalist means simply to give awakened and alert attention to the world around us. It means simply that, instead of seeing birds casually and apathetically, we stare at them attentively and awarély, finding out what their names are, what their

songs are, where and how they nest and what all the intimacies of their lives are like. Being a naturalist means finding out which wildflower are which, instead of thinking only in the vague general term, "vegetation." It means cocking a sharp eye at the stars, or listening with an acute ear to the sounds of the night, or smelling with a new keenness of discernment, and a new understanding the earth-smells that drift in at the open window. Being a naturalist means simply being alive to nature instead of being, as we mostly are, half-alive or largely dead.

It is not necessary to have scientific training in order to be a naturalist. There are, of course, naturalists who are highly trained technical scientists and it is of course the case that even a naturalist, even the most amateur or most late-coming to the field, must acquire a certain science-mindedness. But advanced training in the technicalities of science is not necessary for being a naturalist, and a good one.

What famous naturalists off-hand come most readily to mind? Well, there was John Burroughs. When that fine old naturalist died, he too to the grave with him a nature-lore truly prodigious; but he was a self-taught man, with no scientific degree to his name. Ernest Thompson Seton was an animal-observer of extraordinary attainments, who discovered innumerable nature-facts not known before his time; but of scientific training he had none. Henry Thoreau and John Muir were not scientists. The

were naturalists. They were good ones. It was likewise so with Mabel Osgood Wright, that admirable bird-observer, and with John James Audubon, the observer and painter, and with the woodcraft-master, Dan Beard.

If we think of the English naturalists, the same kinds of people come to mind: Richard Jefferies, sound and accurate and delightful, but no scientist . . . the incomparable W.H. Hudson, beloved by many scientists but not originally schooled to belong to their company . . . the contemporary Henry Williamson who, untrained as a formal scientist, nevertheless wrote in *Salar the Salmon* what is perhaps the most informative and profoundly insightful book about fish-life that has been published.

It lies open to everyone to be a naturalist. It lies open to everyone not only to have the experience of richer aliveness, which inevitably goes with awakening to discovery of the common miracles of earth, but even to have the experience of discovering brand-new facts under the sun . . . facts previously unknown even to the most expert scientists. The other day I had a letter from a woman in Maine. A farm housewife, she must spend a great deal of her time in the farmhouse kitchen, with nothing to look at but the small doorway view that can be seen from the kitchen window. Ten or fifteen years ago, she became interested in the robins that nested every year in an apple tree. She began to watch them

with a new attentiveness, and she has been watching them with that attentiveness ever since. She has observed every peculiarity of their nest-building each year, and has figured out a theory of the reasons for the variations; she has listened keenly to all the robins' songs and cries and call-notes, and has detected certain patterns in their "language"; she has observed the birds' every behavior, and has written up her notes in her spare time. She is a fine naturalist. Not only has her life been enormously more interesting and expanded, because of her interest, but the manuscript of her accumulated notes — which I forwarded at her request to scientific colleagues — has been pronounced by the ornithological scientists to abound in new discoveries of the liveliest significance.

That sort of thing is not at all uncommon. Naturalists, even the most amateur, make discoveries every day in the week. Not huge and dramatic discoveries, it may be, but the finding of all sorts of odd little facts that fill out the chinks and gaps in formal scientific information. The hundred-odd acres of former farmland that are my own living laboratory have produced dozens of such, over the years of my watching and listening. It is highly unlikely that I shall ever discover a new species of bird, or, squinting up at the country sky on one of these glittering January nights, see a star that none of my astronomer friends has ever noticed. But after fifteen years of watching phoebes, I

did see one pull up a worm, robin-fashion, which phoebes are not supposed to do, and the observation has made its way into the scientific phoebe-records. The phenomenon of a robin building nine nests side by side, in nine successive days, and laying three eggs in the first one, two eggs in the second, and one in each of the remaining seven, is not sufficiently arresting to make the front page of the newspapers; but it has been exciting enough to agitate appropriate scientific circles, and it was an exciting thing for me to see. Those of us who are home-acre naturalists, train-window naturalists, housewife or garden-variety naturalists, may find no new stars or discover no new species of animals. But all of us can make discoveries. All of us can be pioneers. As Fabre rightly remarked, by no means everything about even the commonest ant is known to human knowledge. Any small patch of the planet to which we give attention with alert eyes and ears and nostrils may at any moment disclose to us unsuspected secrets.

III

It has become a tired platitude to say that the best things in life are free. But in its platitudinous way the thing is surely everlastingly true. The world of nature *is* free for our enjoyment, from the glory of a sunrise to

the quaintness of a cricket. It is all here, around us, for the taking. There is no charge. Not only free, nature has the priceless advantage of being everywhere. A man may be sick in bed; nature comes in at his window in bird-songs, in flower-scents, in insect-voices, in a thousand kinds of presentation. A deaf man may be a naturalist. One of our best ones cannot hear a sound. A blind man may be a naturalist. Clarence Hawkes, writer of a dozen nature-books, drew his nature-knowledge from what he could hear and smell and touch. He could not see the earth he loved.

We can all of us, in this way or that, be naturalists. We can all take excursions outside ourselves, vacations from our cramping little worlds of four walls and every-dayness. We can make the horizon grow, and our aliveness quicken; we can discover significances in a snow-crystal and astonishing events occurring under a common leaf. To be a naturalist is not to "escape" from the world. It is to re-find it. It is not to run away in fantasy to a far country. It is to come home. It is to return, that is, to the estate of fresh astonishment over the wonder of the nature of things, and of kindled curiosity about it, and of delight to be alive in it and not dead.

Everyone can be a naturalist. It carries its incalculable rewards.



NOTES ON HUMAN FERTILITY

BY W. W. BAUER, M.D

JAMES MONROE HARRIS and his wife made the headlines in 1937 because of a spectacular achievement. Born to Mrs. Harris when she was 39 years old were twin boys, Thomas Jefferson Harris and Robert E. Lee Harris, named in honor of their father's *Confederate war service*. According to the father, the babies were "sound as a dollar." A daughter of these same parents, Vera Lee, was six years old at the time, and another son, James, was eleven years old. At the times his children were born he had been, respectively, 81, 86 and 87 years old.

Skeptics have long classified as legendary the Biblical story of Sarah, who laughed sardonically when she was told that she would give Abraham a son. She said: "After I am old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

. . . Now Abraham and Sarah were old, and well stricken in age, and it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women." But "Sarah conceived . . . and Abraham was a hundred years old when his son was born unto him."

Some headlines in the modern press sound strangely like this passage from the Book of Genesis. There was George Isaac Hughes, of New Bern, North Carolina, who became a father at 94 and again at 96. He boasted that he would live at least to the age of 110, as his grandmother had done. He claimed, and his appearance bore him out, that he was in full possession of his health and faculties. Unfortunately, he succumbed to publicity and notoriety. With his first child, then 16 months old, he attended a baby show, was the principal attraction of a festival at Asheville, and appeared on a nation-wide radio hook-up. It was feared that he would not live to witness the birth of his second child. He survived an influenza attack at that time, but died a year later from a respiratory infection and a heart attack, at the age of 97.

In Detroit, James S. Hornshaw, who was 69 years old in 1938, announced that his wife, then 50, had presented him with twins for the second time in twenty months. Smoking

W. W. BAUER, M.D., is director of the Bureau of Health Education of the American Medical Association. He has been, at various times, an officer in the U.S. Army Medical Corps, a practicing physician, and health commissioner of Racine, Wisconsin. He is the author of many books and magazine articles, his last previous contribution to the *MERCURY* being "What Doctors Know about Arthritis," which appeared in the issue of September 1945.

a big black cigar when the reporters interviewed him, he announced that these twins were no inferior specimens, either; they weighed seven pounds apiece. They brought the total of his children to thirteen, of which nine had been borne by his second wife. Eleven of these children were living, including one of the first set of twins; the latter weighed 33 pounds at the age of approximately eighteen months.

And then there was the recent publicity about Queen Wilhelmina of Holland, which mentioned the fact that she had been born when her father was 61 years old.

II

In the general population, approximately four babies out of every hundred are born to mothers who are over 40 at the time of the birth. Male fertility is not infrequently manifested beyond the age of 60. However, maternity is rare past the age of 50, and is sometimes difficult to verify in the absence of birth records for persons born a half century or more ago. This difficulty is greatest when the births occurred in rural areas, or in poorly organized communities, and in families where no Bible records of births or baptisms were preserved. All the cases of maternity or paternity at ages beyond the usual child-bearing span must be taken on the assumption that verification has been carried as far as possible, but that a reasonable question of doubt may be entertained as to the exact ages of the parents.

There is the case, for example, of

Mr. and Mrs. Leonidas H. Moore, reported from Spring Mountain, Koshocton County, Ohio, on January 9, 1928. In the newspaper clipping Mr. Moore was said to be 72 and his wife 52 when there was born to them a daughter. When this statement was checked by the Registrar of Vital Statistics, the actual ages proved to be 70 for the father and 51 for the mother. But for our purposes, these minor discrepancies are obviously of less importance than the fact that the inspector found these relatively aged parents to be a very active and healthy couple. This daughter was their third child. The mother was a leader of many activities in the community and the father, an ex-schoolteacher, was an active farmer.

Probably the oldest parents in the world, if we can believe the records, were Margaret Krasionna, of Konin, a village in Poland, and her husband. She died in 1763 at the age of 108. At the age of 94 this woman is said to have married her third husband, Kasper Raycol, who at that time was 105 years old. They lived together for fourteen years, during which time she bore him two boys and a girl. Another aged mother was reported in the chronicles of Louis XV of France. La Belle Paule Fiesche, a Parisian woman was said to have become a mother at the age of 90.

A considerable amount of superstition and fear surround the topic of parenthood occurring beyond the ordinary age limits. Some of it is justified and some is not. The three chil-

children born after the age of 94 to Margaret Krasówna were said to have shown plainly the marks of the advanced ages of their parents. These children were described as gray-haired, without teeth, and without sufficient strength to eat solid food. They were supposed to have been the correct size for their ages, but to have pallid complexions, bent backs, and 'all the other external symptoms of decrepitude.' The facts regarding these incredible children are said to be certified by the parish registers in the village of Czyuszyn in the district of Stench in the palatinate of Sandomierz.

In modern investigations of the effect of parental age on children we find some definite indications, and many indefinite suggestions, that it might be just as well, if one had the choice, to be the child of young parents, or, at any rate, of a young mother. Studies of 1000 patients at a state hospital for mental diseases showed that practically 10 per cent had mothers who were over 40 years old when the patients were born. This is almost three times the percentage of births to mothers over 40 in the population as a whole. It is virtually three times the percentage of patients with mothers over 40 in a parallel control study of psychoneurotic, but not mentally deficient, patients. This study also revealed that 174 of these 1000 patients had mothers who died before the patients were twenty years old. This would seem logical from the large percentage of elderly mothers, but there is one confusing statistic in

these studies. A high death rate occurred among the younger mothers, not the more elderly ones, among whom more deaths might have been expected. The authors advance no explanation for this finding.

Other studies have indicated that 37 per cent of the mothers of Mongolian idiots were 40 years of age or more when the defective offspring were born, whereas only 2 per cent of mothers were over 40 in a control series, that is, in a series of mothers of non-Mongolian offspring. Young mothers do occasionally give birth to Mongolian idiots, but such births are frequently followed by one or more births of normal children. Advanced maternal age is by no means the sole cause of Mongolian idiocy, but it is evidently a contributing factor. Let me hasten to add that Mongolism is rare and is not expected even in elderly mothers, except in extremely unusual circumstances.

111

The order in which children are born may also affect their health. The first child, even of young parents, and especially of very young parents, is not likely to be as well-favored biologically as the subsequent children. On the other hand, it appears that there may be something called reproductive exhaustion, and that the last of a long series of children may not be as robust physically, or as talented mentally, as the earlier children of the same series. These variations are usually minor, however, and exceptions are

numerous. For example, I have personal knowledge of a mother whom I delivered at the age of 47 years of her eighteenth child. The baby showed no signs of abnormality. The mother made a quick, uneventful recovery.

Amram Scheinfeld, in his book, *You and Heredity*, discusses the effect of maternal age upon the child and attributes the differences to environment, not to heredity. A child born when the mother is in the mid-forties and the father has reached or passed sixty is not infrequently frail and sickly. Scheinfeld attributes this not to weakness in the sperm or egg cell of the parent, but to the following principal factors, all environmental and some pre-natal:

- (a) The older mother provides less favorable intra-uterine environment;
- (b) The older mother has had greater opportunity to become affected by disease which may in turn affect the pregnancy and the offspring;
- (c) Late births are generally undesired, and they tend to occur under unfavorable conditions.

Scheinfeld further points out that the child of old age often grows up among older and more mature brothers and sisters and their friends. The parents are older and further removed from the child's young world. The late child is thus often brought up in a special world of his own, and so it is not surprising if he shows signs of being precocious, high-strung, and otherwise abnormal. But his heredity is as good or bad as the heredity of any other child of the same parents, regardless of parental age.

In his *Study of British Genius*, Havelock Ellis indicates that eldest children or youngest children in large families are most likely to attain eminence. In his group of families studied, 30 per cent of children who became famous were oldest and 21 per cent youngest, while only 47 per cent came from the much more numerous intermediate groups. (He had studied families ranging in size from two to thirteen.) When survivors only were considered, the youngest children occupied a still more conspicuous position. Since youngest children, especially in large families, are the most likely to have aging parents, these studies deny the popular belief that the children of aging parents inherit weakened mental or physical qualities.

Ellis cites the case of Charles Leslie, an eminent British clergyman whose father was 79 at the time of his birth. This was the oldest father among the 299 parents of British geniuses studied by Ellis. The most common age of fatherhood, he found, was from 30 to 34 years. But for every man who fathered an eminent child during the average ages of paternity, there are nearly three individuals who became the fathers of eminent children later in life.

Francis Galton's study of 100 British men of science showed that the average age of the fathers when these men were born was 36, and the maximum number were born of fathers between the ages of 30 and 35. In the general population the maximum fertility is at the parental ages of 20 to 24

ears. In other words, older parents infinitely seem to supply an environment that is conducive to genius.

IV

Not only the years beyond the menopause, but also those prior to the development of the ordinary menstrual cycle, sometimes witness the birth of a child. On June 3, 1866, Clementine Aimée Pernon, an eight-year-old French girl, gave birth to a perfectly developed child, as reported by Dr. Max J. Schroeder of New York. Another remarkable French report was authenticated by the Obstetrician of the French Royal Court, on July 4, 1756 and notarized by the Minister of Police and Royal Notary. These officials certified that one Magdelaine-Charlotte Jacquette-Renaud, nine years old, was delivered by operative measures of a male child, and that she arrived. The child was reported to be well and "in every respect like the child of a normal mother." The mother received a pension of 1500 francs and was placed in a convent after her recovery. The father died in the interim; he would otherwise have been severely punished.

Probably the youngest of all mothers is a Mohammedan girl of Delhi, India. The record is certified by Dr.ilda L. Keene, of the Victoria Zenana Hospital, Delhi. Her age of seven years was verified by municipal records. She was delivered by Caesarian operation of a living girl weighing four pounds and three ounces. Except for some very natural fright, the young

mother recovered perfectly and nursed her baby for nine months. When the baby was weaning she weighed a little over eleven pounds.

This record for young mothers is, however, contested by a girl in Lima, Peru, who was reported to have given birth to a baby in 1939 at the age of five, or at the most, six years. The child was said to have shown signs of sexual maturity, including regularly established menstrual function, at seven months. This report was strongly supported by the Peruvian medical profession and just as strongly doubted by North American physicians. There the matter seems to rest.

Other variations from normal fecundity are found in some rather dubious old records. One girl is said to have given birth to one child the first year, twins the second, triplets the third, and so on until the sixth year, at which point she gave up and died. This story was certified under the authority of no less a personage than Dr. Ambroise Paré, the pioneer military surgeon in the reign of King Henry IV of France.

The record for total production probably goes to a remarkable woman formerly living near the Austro-German border, who was the mother of 69 children, of which not one was born singly. This mother had four sets of quadruplets, seven sets of triplets, and sixteen sets of twins. The indomitable husband of this woman evidently survived her, because he had eighteen additional children by his second wife. The father was re-

ported by one investigator to be "hale and hearty and 77 years old." He had sired a total of 87 offspring!

Fertility depends upon the production of living male and female cells of sufficient vitality so that when impregnation occurs the fertilized ovum will be capable of growing and developing into an adult organism of sustaining life. There is little doubt that heredity has much to do with the length of the reproductive cycle in a given individual. It is well known that the approximate beginning, duration and ending of a woman's menstrual life can be calculated fairly closely from a knowledge of the experience of her mother, grandmother and older sisters. With few exceptions, fertility runs parallel to menstruation because the menstrual function, in most cases, is merely the external evidence of fertility. Few women are fertile far beyond the menopause; and those who are fertile before the onset of the menstrual function are genuine rarities.

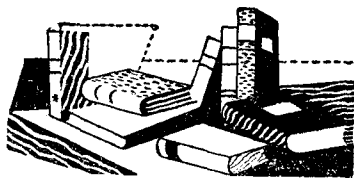
In men, fertility lasts far longer than in women. One has only to read the monotonous "begat" chapters in Genesis to realize this. We find no modern records indicating motherhood much beyond the age of 50, but we do find in our own time paternity well verified in the 90s. One woman

of my acquaintance, searching the genealogical records to establish her eligibility for membership in the DAR, found that the ancestor who made her acceptable had become a parent, and thus started her branch of the family, at the age of 89 years after being comfortably retired from his duties in the Revolutionary Army.

To sum up briefly: Medical record seem to indicate that the best parent are young parents, but not too young. The best years for parenthood are probably between 20 and 35 for women, and between 25 and 45 for men. Although many of the old superstitions about the children of older parents are without foundation, there is some evidence to show that the best parents are those at the height of youthful maturity. The child whose parents are elderly may suffer environmental, though probably not hereditary, disadvantages. Furthermore younger parents have a greater life expectancy and are therefore more likely to live until their children have grown up. Younger parents have more vitality for guiding and enjoying the boundless energy of growing children. Younger parents are not so far removed from the experiences of their own childhood, and are far less likely to experience difficulty in understanding their children.



THE LIBRARY



THE CASE OF HARRY HOPKINS

by **BERTRAM D. WOLFE**

WHO was Harry Hopkins? I have just gone through nearly a thousand pages of his memoranda, state papers, autobiographical fragments, and broadcasts from the center of the whirlwind, all edited, glossed, interpreted and rounded out by the professional writing of his friend and admirer, Robert E. Sherwood. [*Roosevelt and Hopkins: an Intimate History*, by Robert E. Sherwood. \$6.00, Harper.] I have learned that he wore a battered hat, was an ulcerous type, had a frail body, a salty wit and an ardent and indomitable will; that he liked race tracks and night clubs; that he was brash, self-confident, ill-informed, quick to learn and a quick thinker; that he lived through the troubled war years on injections, protein concentrates, packets of pills and borrowed time; and that, slumped sick and exhausted in the bottom of a plane seat, he flew to Moscow, London, Teheran and Yalta, where his wisdom or lack of it contributed

powerfully to the making of the present "peace." Yet I still do not sense the living man or find properly estimated his rôle and place in history.

This is due to the failure in writing and thinking of Robert Sherwood. A dramatist, he does not know how to develop his protagonist's character through the latter's speeches and actions. A stylist, his style bogs down in a mass of undigested papers and his own too uncritical admiration for his hero. This Pulitzer Prize winner permits himself such rhetorical horrors as "essential essence" and "Stalin was not talking through his own or anyone else's hat." Wherever the Hopkins notes are set side-by-side with the Sherwood interpretations, it is Sherwood who is stale, flat and unrevealing. Thus when Hopkins was worrying about the effect of his divorce upon his Presidential aspirations, Sherwood writes that Hopkins was consoled by President Cleveland's having survived "a damaging scandal." But a photostat illustration shows that Hopkins actually wrote the words: "Cleveland — bastard." Again, Sherwood tries to explain Hopkins' Socialist vote in 1917: "Hopkins

was disgusted with both the Democratic and Republican parties, the latter having also rejected [fusion candidate] Mitchell, and he supported Morris Hillquit, the Socialist." But, when questioned in the Senate as to why he "registered and voted Socialist," Hopkins answers more vividly and more truthfully: "I was then profoundly moved by a desire . . . to see the United States kept out of war."

This last "difference in style" carries us close to the heart of the defects in Sherwood's portrait. Having gone from poetry to politics on the issue of bringing the United States into the Second World War, the author cannot understand how anyone could have been anti-war in either conflict. He sets out to "shield" his hero from the "charge," documented by the Hopkins papers themselves, that Harry Hopkins was by conviction a liberal pacifist, who played a leading rôle in the second war only because he was convinced that his "chief could do no wrong."

II

Sherwood's political illiteracy makes the first 219 pages of his book, on the New Deal, singularly unilluminating. Hopkins was first of all a New Dealer, by training and fanatical conviction a social worker who had got his hand on the spending levers of government. But Sherwood joined the Roosevelt entourage only when the New Deal was being converted into a war-spending project to aid the Allies.

For the earlier phases he shows little understanding. They were to him only and exclusively a series of devices for getting the unemployed back to work. Here too, Hopkins' own notes prove more critical of "leaf-raking" and "boondoggling" than do his biographer's pages.

When Ickes says that government spending should result not merely in relief jobs, but also in roads built, dams constructed, irrigation projects, reforestation, and other long-term capital gains for the money paid out, Sherwood takes Hopkins' part against Ickes. But when Hopkins secretly converts WPA to military purposes, Sherwood defends this as readily as the boondoggling, without ever noticing the difference in meaning and basic direction. One looks in vain for any critical estimate of the monopoly-encouraging features of NRA, the pig-killing and plowing-under aspects of AAA, the higher nonsense of currency manipulation, which sought to cure an economic fever by tampering with the thermometer. For that matter, one looks in vain for any understanding of the positive and permanent achievements of the New Deal: social security, bank deposit insurance, stock market regulation, government concern with the problem of full employment. Each of these requires a balance sheet of pluses and minuses. Hopkins' last notes suggest that if he had lived to do his own autobiography, he might have attempted it. But Sherwood stands as uncomprehending before the New

Deal as GI Joe before the Sphinx in Egypt.

Unconsciously, Sherwood reveals what is wrong with Part I of his book when he entitles Part II: "1941 — More Than Mere Words." To him Hopkins' mighty prewar labors and huge expenditures in WPA are . . . "mere words." Only with lend-lease and wartime negotiations does it seem to him that his hero has got down to business.

But his hero thought differently. After Roosevelt's reelection in 1936, Hopkins told members of his staff as they were driving out to the race track: "Boys, this is our hour! We've got to get everything we want — a works program, social security, wages and hours, everything. Now or never . . . a complete ticket to provide security for all the folks of this country."

For some New Dealers, the war and its automatic full employment came as a welcome relief from the unsolved problems of the New Deal. But for Hopkins it was an annoying, if inescapable, interruption. And, a few days before his death, one of the last memos he dictated for his intended biography concerned itself with the peacetime employment of the returning soldiers. It called for social insurance and public works, but it wisely warned against the dangers inherent in these measures: "It would be a terrible day for America if the rest of us did not want to earn our living by work, or could not. . . . I would hate to see the backbone of full

employment ever be public works for the sake of providing the employment. . . ." Thus the model grows too big for the pen of the artist who is sketching him!

III

"A welfare worker from the Cornbelt," Sherwood calls his hero, "who tended to regard money, his own as well as other people's, as something to be spent as quickly as possible."

Under the New Deal, Hopkins directed the spending of some \$9 billion. Then he moved into lend-lease, where he played a deciding rôle in the manner of spending some \$60 billion! Once more, as in the fight with Ickes, he was in too much of a hurry to get the spending started to stop and consider fully what long-term value would be received, *i.e.*, to consider what kind of peace agreements would come from the spending.

When Hopkins flew to Moscow, he had only one idea: to find out what the Kremlin wanted and to give it as quickly as possible. "Mr. Hopkins is in Moscow," Roosevelt informed the astonished Stalin, "for discussions on how we can most expeditiously and effectively . . . render assistance to your country." Not a word about war aims! Nor about Stalin's disgorging his conquests in Poland, the Baltic countries and the Balkans, which he had just got by dividing Europe with Hitler. "I told him," Hopkins adds, "that my mission was not a diplomatic one in the sense that I did not propose to make *any formal*

understanding of any kind or character."
[My emphasis — B. D. W.]

Stalin was prepared for anything but this. Having tried to divide Europe with his brigand-partner and then been double-crossed, he fully expected to have to give up his booty and to change sides so far as programs and objectives were concerned, before he could get the aid he desperately needed in his struggle for survival. Especially aid from the United States, which was not even at war, for Hopkins' visit was a full five months before Pearl Harbor. A hard bargainer, he was not used to people with so little sense of political realities and power levers. "Even with its very life in danger," writes Sherwood, summarizing the uncomprehending Hopkins, "the Soviet government appeared to be more anxious to discuss future frontiers and spheres of influence than to negotiate for military supplies." But Hopkins and Roosevelt refused to be tempted!

When Stalin recovered from his astonishment, he asked for 20,000 anti-aircraft guns, a million rifles, and machine guns, planes, aluminum and high octane gas. Being pressed further he added trucks and tanks and jeeps, boots and food, and a billion dollars. Ultimately he received \$11 billion in lend-lease, without ever being asked to do anything but fight for his existence, in a fight forced upon him by Hitler. Naturally, with such "negotiators," he soon concluded that he could keep what he had gained from Hitler, and even enlarge upon it.

He alone seemed to realize that peace is the continuation of the war out of which it issues, and that, by the military and political decisions of the war itself, the peace was being made piecemeal. When Churchill finally woke up, a trifle late, and began to demand that the Anglo-American troops jump from North Africa to the Balkans, it was Hopkins and Roosevelt who preened themselves on blocking Churchill. So little did Hopkins, and so little does Sherwood, understand the meaning of this conflict over "strategy," that the word "Balkans" does not even figure in the index of this book. Yet the situation would be vastly changed today if we had gone into the Balkans instead of Sicily.

IV

How different was the attitude of Hopkins and Roosevelt towards Great Britain! With Churchill they kept making conditions and arguing over India and Egypt, colonies and trusteeships, Imperial Preference and post-war trade. To be sure, these were legitimate concerns, but not such as to warrant giving them priority over the freedom of the lands to be liberated, which was the very heart of the war itself.

And the Roosevelt-Hopkins treatment of China is enough to move the thoughtful reader to tears. From these pages emerges a picture of neglect, under-estimation, miscalculation and blind folly. For ten years there was no aid because, to use Sher-

wood's own words, "we were attempting to appease Japan." Then no aid "because of distance," though we were pouring billions into distant Russia. Then because apologists for the Chinese Communists had persuaded our officials to withhold lend-lease as a means of forcing the Central Government to enter into what would have been a suicidal coalition with the Communists. And finally, because the appeasement of Russia had taken the place of the appeasement of Japan. "The awful demonstration of the difference between reality and promises," wrote T. V. Soong in desperation, "is underlined by the swiftness with which it is announced that deliveries of aircraft are being made to the Soviet Union. . . . I have now been in the United States over fourteen months pleading for planes. . . . In the fourteen months not a single plane." Sherwood portrays Hopkins as "deeply concerned" about this failure of ours to keep our promises. Yet, two years later, when Mme. Chiang adds her pleadings to those of Soong, Hopkins can think of nothing better than to urge Roosevelt "at least to see her" and let her "get everything off her chest. . . ."

v

The story of Hopkins and of Roosevelt comes to a climax in their meetings with Stalin and Churchill at Teheran and Yalta. Through Sherwood's apologetic pages obtrude the outlines of political unpreparedness, ineptness, and a callousness to the fate

of lesser allies that borders on outright betrayal.

At Teheran, Stalin showed that he had not, even then (this was at the end of 1943), lost his admiration for Hitler and his "methods."

He said that Hitler was a very able man. . . . He did not share the view of the President that Hitler was mentally unbalanced, and emphasized that only a very able man could accomplish what Hitler had done in solidifying the German people, whatever we thought of the methods. [Official Summary by State Department translator.]

Thus warned on how Stalin believed in "solidifying" the people or peoples over whom he might rule, his partners proceeded to give him ample scope to try out his "methods." Churchill implied that he would be glad to give away a slice of Turkey. Roosevelt, not to be outdone, handed out a generous portion of China. ("It was Roosevelt who mentioned the possibility that Russia might have access to the port of Dairen in Manchuria. . . . Stalin immediately expressed the opinion that the Chinese would object to this proposal, but Roosevelt said he thought they would agree to having Dairen made a free port under international guarantee.") Once more the surprised Stalin was not slow to take the hint. At Yalta he was ready to demand what at Teheran his dear allies — no less the allies of China — had so kindly suggested. "And then," continues Sherwood, "there was an agreement on the frontiers of Poland . . . with the evolve-

ment of a formula much like that which was eventually adopted." Here the "credit" goes not to Roosevelt but to Churchill!

Between Teheran and Yalta there occurred the four-day war between Russia and Bulgaria. It should have taught Roosevelt a lesson, but he was so preoccupied with keeping the story from the American people, lest it shock them into an awareness of the problems of an alliance with a totalitarian power in the shaping of the coming peace, that he drew no lessons himself. Sherwood still does not know the story, or does not care to tell it. "By October 1," he writes casually, "both Finland and Bulgaria had quit the Axis and the Red Army had occupied both countries." Not another word! Except that Churchill began to worry about the outlines of the peace, and Hopkins began to worry lest Churchill's talks with Stalin on this question might appear to represent also the thought of the United States.

Since the American people still do not know the story of Bulgaria's four-day war with Russia, it might well be summarized here. Until September 1944, Bulgaria was at war with the United States and England, but not with Russia. On September 2, it overthrew its pro-Hitler government. The new democratic government severed relations with Germany, offered unconditional surrender to England and the United States, and prepared a declaration of war on Germany. The Allies, as a matter of courtesy, notified their partner, Sta-

lin. On September 5, he declared war on Bulgaria, whereupon Bulgaria immediately asked him for peace terms, and the Red Army occupied Bulgaria. The men who had led the democratic resistance, Mushanov, Dimitrov, Petkov, have since been convicted and either escaped (Dimitrov) or been executed (Petkov). Thus, in September 1944, months before the Yalta Conference, Stalin showed in action what he meant by "liberation," and by the "cooperation between the United Nations in setting up democratic governments."

VI

But at Yalta, in February 1945, Hopkins and Roosevelt again gloried in defeating Churchill's proposal for a military expedition across the Adriatic into the Balkans. Thus left without support, Churchill tried to bargain with Stalin as one imperialist trader with another: Poland in exchange for Greece, and share-and-share alike in Yugoslavia — all this without Poles, Greeks or Yugoslavs being represented at the conference. What happened to this deal is by now a matter of painful history.

It was Roosevelt, intent on getting Stalin into the war with Japan, who made the proposals for selling China down the river. "It is quite clear," writes Sherwood, "that even before Teheran, Roosevelt had been prepared to agree to . . . most if not all of the Soviet claims in the Far East. . . . Roosevelt said that he would send an American officer to Chung-

king to inform Chiang Kai-shek of the agreements. Stalin insisted that these agreements be put in writing and that they contain the statement: 'The Heads of the three Great Powers have agreed that these claims of the Soviet Union shall be unquestionably fulfilled after Japan has been defeated.' " Thus, without China being represented or consulted, Russia was brought into Manchuria, into Port Arthur and Dairen, and into Northern Korea; and thus the great flanking operation was begun which has, even as I write, resulted in the loss of Mongolia, all of Manchuria and North China, imperiling the very existence of the Chinese Central Government.

When Roosevelt ran for reelection he was not well. He returned from the wearying Yalta Conference a sick man indeed. Yet a few months more, and he was able to perceive, only too clearly, the terrible outlines of the coming peace, as it was shaping up in Rumania, Yugoslavia and Poland. On the last day of his life, he dispatched his famous warning to Churchill that England and the United States must be firm in their relations with Stalin. But his death left the sick-unto-death Harry Hopkins to make the last trip to Moscow alone on behalf of the still uninitiated Harry Truman. The account of those negotiations is too painful to bear retelling. Hopkins by now knew that the peace would be a "great headache," but he was no match for Stalin, and he possessed no power lever to use in a tug of war

with the most powerful ruler on earth.

That picture does more than all of Sherwood's analysis to answer the question which we posed at the beginning of this article.

Who was Harry Hopkins? He was the twentieth-century version of Jackson's kitchen cabinet. Linked to the President by their common element of physical infirmity, by his worshipful devotion, by his dedication to the New Deal, by a common unpreparedness for the working out of a foreign policy, he was the personal representative of a President who unconsciously drifted into the rôle of an undemocratic "Chief of State," secretly, privately and personally negotiating with two other Chiefs of State. "Churchill," says Sherwood naïvely, "was constantly reporting to and consulting the War Cabinet in London, addressing his communications to Clement Attlee . . . whereas Roosevelt was completely on his own." Unconsciously, Roosevelt fell into the trap of using the Russian *Vozhd's* (Leader's) method of negotiation. This guaranteed that Teheran and Yalta would be corrupted with secret agreements, that both political parties, and even our State Department, would be uninformed, that Truman would inherit a covert mess which only the dying Hopkins could conceivably uncover for him. And Hopkins himself was only partly informed, without legal political status, and virtually on his deathbed. Sherwood closes his book with a plea for the right of Presidents

to have "personal friends and advisers." This right is unquestioned, and given the enormous powers of our President, inescapable. But the duty to work with and through his State Department, the Senate, and, in times of "national unity," through the leadership of both parties, is no less inescapable. Many of the same mistakes might have been made, but it is the theory of democracy that in the long run collective wisdom, working through duly constituted institutions, is superior to the private and secret negotiations of a "Chief of State" working only with his own

personally selected admirers and private advisers.

As we close Sherwood's book, it is impossible not to admire the courage and loyalty of Harry Hopkins, the unselfishness with which a man always near death's threshold drove his exhausted body and spirit in the great enterprises of lend-lease, war planning and peace negotiations. But it is impossible not to conclude that the Roosevelt-Hopkins negotiations with Stalin present a model of how the head of a state that would remain democratic should not negotiate with the head of a totalitarian state.

AFTER READING AN AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF A SAINT

BY CHARLES ANGOFF

The learned pharisee has spoken
And once again embalmed the good saint
For show and safe-keeping in the gilded halls of orthodoxy.

High priests chant the name
Of the lowly one who would not be of their kind;
Embroidered linen and ermine,
Incense and the sound of chimes
Surround the patient bones of him
Whose church was the desert,
Whose only hymns were the hush of the forest
And the sweet babble of children and birds,
And whose only God was
The glorious mystery in them and the most distant star.

Lepers, paupers, and all those heavy-laden,
Behold the blasphemy upon your lonely saint!

THE CHECK LIST



(Continued from page 5)

"Boston's Temple of Burlesque," "Kit Carson" and a dozen other wonderful and magnificent chapters. Several of them have previously appeared in *THE AMERICAN MERCURY*, and readers of them will need no other recommendation for this book when it is said that the entire volume is done in the best Holbrook manner.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SOL BLOOM. \$3.50. *Putnam*. This is not the usual biography of a politician. It is, in a very real sense, a typically American story of a poor boy, without much formal education, who made good the hard way in various fields — as a theatrical producer, real estate operator, song plugger and United States congressman. His friends include nearly everybody he has ever met, for Sol Bloom never offends and he is very gregarious. It must not be forgotten, however, that he is a very useful law-maker. His record in Congress over the past 26 years, on close examination, turns out to be very good. Not many others in Congress have been so intelligent in their voting. Altogether, a strangely fascinating document.

HISTORY

SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE FAR EAST, by David J. Dallin. \$5.00. *Yale*. Another solid work of scholarship by a man who has previously explored various aspects of Soviet policy in Europe and at home. This work is designed as a history of the Far East since 1931, when Japan invaded Manchuria; but

its principal virtue lies in its irrefutable demonstration of the fact, which is still often clouded in fellow-traveling polemics, that the Chinese Communists are as thoroughly totalitarian a party as any of the other CPs in the world. Mr. Dallin reports at great length on the activities of the Chinese OGPU, on the mass purges of "Trotskyists" and "counter-revolutionaries" in Yenan, and on the apparatus of control from Moscow. His exposition of the relation between the Chinese Communists and the Soviet Army that "liberated" Manchuria in 1945 does a great deal to explain the present strength of the Communists.

THE MIRACLE OF FRANCE, by André Maurois. \$5.00. *Harper*. This is a smoothly written history of France, from Caesar to DeGaulle, which ducks most questions of interpretation and confines itself to chronicling the rise and recent decline of the French nation. For the most part, M. Maurois, a seasoned veteran in the field of biography, has written a rather personalized history, in which a succession of great kings, generals, statesmen and artists parade through his pages with no apparent purpose in life other than the glorification of *la belle France*. The book will probably not be remembered as a monument of scholarship, but, like most of the author's efforts, it is immensely readable.

THE GERMAN GENERALS TALK, by B. H. Liddell Hart. \$4.00. *William Morrow*. Captain Liddell Hart's conversations with the surviving German generals, especially von Runstedt and von Kleist, make an im-

portant contribution to the history of the war. The single most vivid impression one gets from the book is of Hitler's hopeless megalomania: he might well have won the war, the author feels, if he had not insisted on surrounding himself with incompetent sycophants like Keitel and Jodl, and dismissing the men of real talent who refused to agree with him — von Manstein, Halder, von Brauchitsch and others. It is also made clear that the German generals, as a whole, were not one of the forces making for war. "The German General Staff had little influence with Hitler compared with what it had exercised in the Kaiser's time, and . . . it tended to be more of a brake upon his aggressive plans than an impetus to them."

LITERATURE

THE LOST ART OF PROFANITY, by Burges Johnson. \$2.50. *Bobbs-Merrill*. Here is a book that will delight all lovers of mysteries of the English and American languages, whose number, thank God, is increasing rapidly. Dr. Johnson, already well known as a scholar, now adds to his eminence by writing the first one-volume comprehensive discussion of the various forms of cussing in our common tongue. The very titles of his chapters are alluring: "Of Cussing in General," "The Oath Denunciatory (or cursing)," "The Oath Asseverative (or swearing)," "The Oath Interjectional (or exclaiming)," "Maledictions (or naughty words)," "New Fashions in Profanity" and "Present-Day Emphasis: A Cursory Glance." Dr. Johnson's main thesis is as follows: "The underlying trouble with today's swearing is that all the old magic has gone out of it. . . . The resounding echoes of the great oaths of the past grow fainter and fainter . . . [there is] need for an entirely new set of cuss words to fit the new situations of a modern world." H. L. Mencken contributes an appreciative foreword.

THE BEAST IN ME AND OTHER ANIMALS, by James Thurber. \$3.00. *Harcourt*.

Brace. Mr. Thurber's latest collection shows him still trying to define his relation to dogs and women, and still not certain how he stands with either of them. His newest indictment against women is based on their responsibility for the soap opera, an institution which he explores in great detail, and with results that can fairly be described as devastating. The stories and essays in the book seem to indicate that his humor is becoming quieter and his writing more highly stylized. There is a successful parody of Henry James included, but Mr. Thurber's prose has obviously been influenced by James. Most of the cartoons and writings originally appeared in the *New Yorker*.

FICTION

THE CHIPS ARE DOWN, by Jean-Paul Sartre. \$2.75. *Lear*. Mr. Sartre, the guiding spirit of the postwar existentialist movement, has somehow managed to write a novel so thoroughly meretricious that it becomes valid to question the reason for its very existence. His plot, which centers about a dead couple who are granted 24 hours of life in which to consummate their love, has a certain nostalgic charm, redolent of Viennese operetta *kitsch*. Sartre, however, apparently recognizing the absurdity of his fictional premises, has decked out this plot with the aging tricks of German expressionism and *avant-garde* cinema. He makes use of montage-effects, as the American blurb writer so ingenuously describes the sterility of the structure, and of the tag-ends of existentialist café chatter. Mr. Sartre remains an essayist of considerable, albeit flashy, talent, but as a novelist (if *The Chips Are Down* is a novel) his most recent attempt should thoroughly deflate his reputation.

THE SKY IS RED, by Giuseppe Berto. \$3.50. *New Directions*. America has had several postwar artistic importations from Italy dealing with the impact of World War II on the populace of that ravaged country. Here is a book in that same tradition, written by an Italian officer who was a prisoner of

war in America for three years. Berto centers his novel on a group of adolescents who are living, almost huddling together, in a bombed out quarter of a small, rural town, and tells about them and their deeds, or misdeeds, with grim clarity and compassionate tenderness. This is a first book, and an effective one, reflecting a sorrow which is almost resigned in its statement of the facts. Good reading.

THE HEARTH AND EAGLE, by Anya Seton. \$3.50. *Houghton Mifflin*. Here is another of those historical novels in the true epic style, starring Hesper Honeywood, denizen of Marblehead, Mass., unequaled by any in her beauty, ingenuity, courage and sundry other virtues. Though Miss Seton has attempted a noble task in this saga of a salty New England town from the first precarious days of the seventeenth-century settlement to the contemporary resort town of the wealthy, she unfortunately misses her objective by devoting so much space to the several romances of the bosomy heroine. The indomitable Hesper had three loves: an adolescent attachment to a fisher lad, a passion for an artist more interested in his art than in Hesper, and a steady love for a successful businessman. All in all, a mediocre capitalization on Margaret Mitchell's invention of one Scarlett O'Hara.

POETRY

ACT FIVE AND OTHER POEMS, by Archibald MacLeish. \$2.50. *Random House*. This is Mr. MacLeish's first book of verse in over ten years. The title poem, the longest, deals with the present critical condition of the world, and the author's apparent conclusion is that love will solve most problems — at least, that it is the only thing that will alleviate them. The poem is filled with such lines as these: "The God! Oh the God — silver in aspen,/ Dissolving in the dolphin's wake,/ Discovered in cloud, in a girl's lap. . . ." There are about twenty shorter poems about the immemorial subjects of poetry. Unfortunately, Mr. MacLeish has

nothing fresh to say about them. Worse, he hardly makes any sense. His words and phrases are so abstruse and so childishly punctuated that the poems read like gibberish. Is this what happens to a first-rate poetical mind after a decade of mingling in the world of politico-economic ideas?

THE CANTOS OF EZRA POUND. \$5.00. *New Directions*. This volume takes in all the cantos of Ezra Pound to date — *A Draft of XXX Cantos*, *Eleven New Cantos*, *The Fifth Decad of Cantos*, *Cantos LII-LXXI*, and *The Pisan Cantos*, which Pound wrote while he was in a prison camp near Pisa. It represents a stupendous amount of poetical work, all the more amazing since Pound has written a great deal of other poetry and much prose besides. A large section — perhaps as much as three quarters — of the volume is rubbish, pretentious, pointless, adolescent rubbish. But the rest contains some very genuine poetry, some of it, very possibly, of an immortal quality. The Pound magic is a strange combination of intimacy, philosophy, optimism and misanthropy. He is, at the same time, Miltonic and Dickinsonian, Shakespearean and Swiftian. Even in the tragic *Pisan Cantos*, there is a good deal of this magic, especially in the now celebrated section beginning with "What thou lov'st well remains,/the rest is dross,/What thou lov'st well shall not be reft from thee/What thou lov'st well is thy true heritage. . . ."

ALWAYS THE NEED, by Joseph Joel Keith. \$2.00. *Dierkes*. This is a verse story told in the form of forty sonnets. The tale is that of a love triangle, as viewed and experienced by a young boy. Technically, the sequence is almost perfect, and as poetry it is vastly effective, more effective, indeed, than most other poetry sequences. The story moves relentlessly, the imagery is clear, the emotion is sound and true and unwavering, and the over-all effect is truly remarkable. Mr. Keith can sing, he knows many unspoken sadnesses and as many unspoken ecstasies, and he knows the meaning of the stare of a hurt child.

ANTHOLOGIES

MASTERPIECES OF RELIGIOUS VERSE, edited by James Dalton Morrison. \$5.00. *Harper*. Anthologies, it is being said, are a glut on the market, but there is always room for a really good one, based on an original idea. The idea of this one seems obvious enough, but no one before Mr. Morrison has executed it. He has done a magnificent job of selection; it is comprehensive, well organized, and such cutting and extracting as seemed necessary he has done very well. There are more than 2000 poems in all, and some 900 authors are represented. There are three good indices: an index of authors, an index of titles, and an index of first lines. Mr. Morrison is professor of preaching and head of the department of homiletics at the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School.

TURNSTILE ONE, *A Literary Miscellany from The New Statesman and Nation*, edited by V. S. Pritchett. 10s. 6d. *Turnstile*. The *London New Statesman* was founded in 1913, and the *Nation* in 1907, and the two were combined in 1931. Politically, the magazine has been liberal, though of late several of its articles, and sometimes editorials, have shown a strange totalitarian tint. One hopes that this blemish will be done away with soon. The purely literary, artistic and critical content of the magazine has always been of a very high order, and Mr. Pritchett's admirable selection of poems, stories, essays, reviews and letters to the editor is one that should make the editors of many other magazines highly envious. It is difficult to single out for special praise any of the contributions, but the following will surely be read for a long time to come: "Rudyard Kipling," by Rebecca West; "Chekhov," by Desmond MacCarthy; "The Fear of Death," by C. E. N. Joad; "On I know Not What," by Hilaire Belloc; "Bach," by W. J. Turner; and "Beethoven and the Future," by Edward Sackville West. Alas, there are not too many magazines in America that print articles of such high quality. They all reveal immense knowledge, mature and

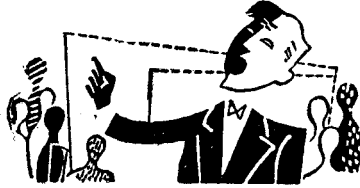
conscientious thinking, and a meticulous desire to use the right word and no other.

TRAVEL

ROVING SOUTH, by Willard Price. \$5.00. *John Day*. The odyssey of Willard Price is different from most of those of professional travelers. Here is a rambling, delightful journey through Latin America, ranging from metropolitan city to primitive outpost. Included in the chronicle of travel are tidbits about famous statesmen, brief historical sketches, estimations of administrations, and rueful anecdotes of discomforts encountered. The itinerary is a romantic one indeed; with Mexico as the starting point, Mr. Price crosses the isthmus, and makes his way down the continent, stopping in every land until he reaches Patagonia, at the southern tip of South America. There is a companion record of photographs and amusing drawings which highlight the book and do much to lift it from the merely banal. We recommend the section dealing with the fabulous food to be found in Argentina; it is worth the price of the book just to gloat over those wonderful menus.

VOYAGES TO THE MOON, by Marjorie Nicolson. \$4.00. *Macmillan*. From Plato to Lewis Carroll, men of letters have undertaken imaginary trips to worlds other than their own. Miss Marjorie Nicolson, a scholar and a lady, has now come along to bind all mankind together more firmly by pointing out that, despite the passage of centuries, the processes of the human mind have not changed one whit. Men of all ages have thumbed their noses at the skeptics, and their efforts have been reflected in a rich trend of literature. Miss Nicolson has found writings touched by the enchantment of naïveté, an enchantment which has been lost to a world made thoroughly practical by science. Anyway, here are some 250 pages of delight as we read of the scientists, such as Galileo, of poets, such as Donne, of modern writers, such as Wells, all engrossed in their speculations of flight to the moon.

THE OPEN FORUM



WHAT JESUS LOOKED LIKE

SIR: Cheers for Alan Devoe's article, "Jesus and Little Lord Fauntleroy," in the November *MERCURY*!

The rugged son of a Galilean carpenter who hobnobbed with hardy fishermen; who took a characteristically sudden storm on the Lake of Gennesaret in His stride; who fraternized with publicans and sinners and was reproached for being a wine-bibber; who incited one riot after another; who flung the epithet, "sons of serpents" (the equivalent of the modern s. o. b.), at His foes; who derided His sovereign, Herod Antipas, with the scornful words, "that old fox"; who single-handedly drove scores of avaricious bankers and merchants out of the Temple precincts before His flailing lash; who "steadfastly set His face to Jerusalem" and certain death; and whose unwavering gaze stared down Pilate, the local embodiment of the mighty Roman Empire — this Man most assuredly was not the sugary, effeminate, namby-pamby person we find so grotesquely caricatured in Sunday School leaflets. . . .

WARREN M. SMALTZ

Lebanon, Pa.

SIR: I was interested in Alan Devoe's "Jesus and Little Lord Fauntleroy," in which he advocates more virile-looking pictures and descriptions of Jesus. I, too, was always bothered by the pictures of the Lord, and wondered why he did not look more Jewish. One day in the Metropolitan Museum of Art I suddenly realized why. During

its long stay in Greece and Rome, among statue-loving people, the church cast off its Semitic taboo against representations; and in the difficult task of depicting Godhood, was influenced by the Greek conception. . . . It wouldn't do to have Jesus look just like Jupiter; it had to be implied that he was more spiritual. So the face was elongated, made thinner.

More rugged representations should help attract men to the church. They would also make the Gospel story vivid and plausible. (Who would fear the stained-glass Jesus enough to crucify him?) And yet I'm not sure but that the traditional figure expresses a metaphysical truth. There is both the feminine and masculine in nature, in creation, in goodness, *i.e.*, in God. God incarnate can be symbolized only by a hermaphroditic figure. . . .

MARGERY MANSFIELD

Monterey, Mass.

SIR: It is a pleasure to read anything by Alan Devoe, even "Jesus and Little Lord Fauntleroy." . . .

It has been suggested that Christ may have been a political myth created by the Romans to distract people's attention from conditions as they were. . . .

JOHN A. SARTH

San Francisco, Cal.

SIR: The *MERCURY*'s suggestion that sissy pictures of Jesus keep people from God must

have been intended as humor. The thought that God's greatest self-sacrifice could have been made ineffective by the inept drawings of His propaganda artists is startling, if not funny. It puts God on a par with primitive household deities who could be tripped up by incantations and spells.

This brings up the query — why *didn't* God succeed? Was Jesus the greatest failure in history? His promoters say He came to earth to win the hearts and souls of mankind. Why didn't He do it? Hitler demonstrated in fewer than ten years that the hearts and souls of nearly half the earth could be won to a cause much less glamorous than eternal life, but I have the impression that in the two thousand years of Christian effort atheism has destroyed more godliness than religion has established, that sin has multiplied, that theft, murder, war, cruelty and man's general inhumanity to man have been greatly expanded. . . .

Surely it would seem that Jesus, backed by the cosmic power of God and supported for two thousand years by millions on millions of loyal agents, financed by a large part of the earth's wealth and attended by the world's best minds, should have made some headway. I wonder if the hell that has held its own in human societies through the centuries doesn't nominate Jesus as history's worst flop.

So now we are to rescue the situation by picturing Jesus with hair on his chest!

FRED N. KERWIN

Grand Rapids, Mich.

SIR: The article on "Jesus and Little Lord Fauntleroy" shocked this reader as it was intended to. However, the illogical argument that pictures of Jesus could have the effect reported occasioned surprise as well. That none of His disciples or followers described Jesus' personal appearance seems to this Christian as one more proof of His divinity. They were so astonished by the words and personality of the man that His physical appearance was unimportant. We have photographs of Lincoln, and many painters looked at Washington and painted

what they saw. Only from the faulty imaginations of men have come portraits of Our Lord. From the fact that "He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" have come the many pictures and statues of Him as He hung on the cross. Even to us who are Protestants such records of His suffering are a call to better living and greater sacrifice.

It is strange indeed that Alan Devoe, whose profession is that of letters, should have been obsessed by visual, unauthorized "likenesses" of Jesus, when open to him is the Holy Bible with its matchless description of Him as He walked the earth.

Probably the only way to combat such obsessions is to give to the Holy Bible greater publicity.

The Bible Society of New York is indeed doing just that. Millions of copies, in 1090 different languages, are being sent all over the world, in answer to requests received. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

VIRGINIA HIRRICH FOX

Riverside, Conn.

SIR: I am sorry that Mrs. Fox thinks it an "illogical argument" that the depictions of Jesus all too commonly seen in childhood can bias minds in later years. Illogically or not, pictorial representations (of whatever subject) seen in early years do powerfully impress themselves upon our consciousness; and mental images thus acquired can be revised in later years only with great difficulty. This is not a private doctrine of my own, but a familiar fact to any psychologist.

Children are not commonly introduced to Christianity by unillustrated Bibles. Their introduction is *via* Sunday School leaflets, booklets, and simplified texts with illustrations. Several local Sunday School teachers have equipped me with a bale of this material currently in use; and I find that most of the pictures of Jesus are still as unfortunate as they were in my childhood. I have been greatly interested to learn, from these same Sunday School teachers, that their work is powerfully hindered by their small boys'

vivid and distasteful impression that Jesus "looked like a sissy."

Though my correspondent professes to have been "shocked" by my article, I assure her that it was written in no spirit of mischievous irreverence. I quite agree that the unadorned text of the New Testament is "matchless" in the picture it gives. That is why I regret the persistent practice of matching it up — in Sunday School literature and in countless illustrated Bibles — with priggish pictorializings of Jesus which can mislead the young reader into a lifelong misunderstanding and antipathy. In the production of vivid impressions, as has been immemorially remarked, one picture is more influential than a thousand words.

ALAN DEVOE

Hillsdale, N. Y.

EPISTLE FROM THE PROLETARIAT

SIR: In the October issue of the *MERCURY* there is an article, "Are Communists Traitors to America?" by Roscoe Drummond. My answer to that question is, they are traitors to the working class of America because they are wrong and have the wrong program. A socialized working class in a highly developed industrialized country like ours can't have a dictatorship of the proletariat. When Industrial Democracy is allowed to be born here (as it surely will be) it will be a true democracy, with goods and services being produced primarily for use, instead of profit. . . .

A. H. JARVIS

Bucksport, Me.

HEARING AIDS

SIR: This note calls for no reply. It is just to express appreciation of Percival Wilde's article in the August *MERCURY* on "Racketeering in Hearing Aids." For some months, I have been wishing someone would take over this job of journalistic ventilation. I attempted such an article myself but lacked the breadth of inquiry your article displays. . . .

May I call your attention to one point that neither your article nor the literature of audiphones touches on, namely, the choice of the correct ear for the earpiece insertion. Some instrument makers suggest the poorer ear for the receiver and others the better ear. My adviser for a hearing aid suggested (or rather, insisted) on the use of the poorer (left) ear. But I switched to my better ear (the right one) and get somewhat better results. This I think is due to the fact that I am right-handed and therefore left-brained. Putting the receiver in my left ear sends messages to the right temporal lobe, which gives only confusing loudness. The change-over sends its impulses to my educated (left) hemisphere, where interpretation of sounds goes on. In either case, however, my hearing range is increased by only a few feet. The whole business is very disappointing and I have tried out a dozen instruments, but my right ear loss is 50 per cent and my left is 70 per cent. My trouble is in my auditory nerves.

F. M. GREGG, PH.D.

Upper Sandusky, O.

MILKING COWS UNDER SOCIALISM

SIR: Milk is a product of the cow; it is neither a product of socialism nor of capitalism. This simple truth seems to be forgotten in the heated discussion about the respective merits of economic systems. [See "Life Under Socialism in England," in the August *MERCURY*.] Your esteemed contributor, H. W. Seaman, has the right to call his government inept and to object to its aims and principles; but how in the name of God and of reason can he expect to extract more milk from Mr. Churchill than from Sir Stafford Cripps? England simply hasn't got the cows. . . .

I am editor of *Economic Trends*, a business letter written exclusively for corporate management, and I am not interested in doctrinaire debate, but in the proper interpretation of facts. As far as argument goes, I am interested in cleanliness and sobriety, for

I happen to be a former teacher of philosophy. Please allow me to point up a few of the devices which ought to be banished from honest presentation of argument.

The fallacy of big figures: You can amaze any audience by throwing "millions" at it. Writes Mr. Seaman: "Textile chiefs report that goods piled up in warehouses would absorb 480 million coupons' worth of clothing. There is similar surplus of shoes." Sounds like a tremendous amount of clothes the government, out of sheer inefficiency or maybe sadistic pleasure, fails to distribute. To find out what the big figure means, you just have to divide the millions by the number of Britons who are entitled to clothes. Since England and Northern Ireland have 48 million inhabitants, you wind up with merchandise worth 10 coupons per head of the population — and a suit costs 26 coupons, an undershirt three. . . . Put it otherwise: Britain's available textile stocks wouldn't last two months. Ask any textile man, and he will tell you that this is not enough to assure smooth distribution under any circumstances. If you consult U. S. Department Store statistics, published every month by the Federal Reserve Banks, you will find that in our capitalist society, stocks in fast-moving retail outlets alone amount to three months' sales: a like amount is in manufacturers' and mills' and wholesalers' warehouses. To keep the population well clothed, there must be at least six months' consumption in the distribution pipelines. Instead of accusing the government of failure to distribute, Mr. Seaman would have been better advised to ask why stocks are so low. But he was a victim of the fallacy of big figures.

The fallacy of incomplete identification: Mr. Seaman reports the hilarious blunder of a rationing officer who told a man that he could go to his business by car but had to return by bus. We all agree that this is a typical boner of bureaucracy. Where there is bureaucracy, the thoughtlessness of an employee must needs become a public concern. The man should be dismissed, but that would not relieve England's gasoline shortage;

England does not have the dollars to buy gasoline, and the unfortunate car owner may have to use the bus both ways. But he does not curse the war which brought the dollar shortage, nor the gasoline shortage which is its consequence; he blames "socialism" which he identifies with bureaucracy. Writes Mr. Seaman: "Meanwhile the country swarms with public officials: 700,000 in the state service. . . ." Bureaucracy, it is implied, would not exist without socialism. But the number of civil service employees has not increased, and it is proportionally not higher in England than in capitalist America. . . .

The fallacy of incomplete information: You may swing any audience, provided it has no more information on the subject than you are willing to let it have. . . . Writes Mr. Seaman: "Today we have Aneurin Bevan proclaiming that it is more blessed to rent a house from a public authority than to own a house, forbidding us to build houses for ourselves even with our own material and labor." At first reading this, I admit, I was aroused: why should a man not be allowed to build his house with his own materials? I imagined Mr. Bevan, keen on imposing socialist ideals of community life on a reluctant population, decreeing that henceforth no private houses would be tolerated. This is exactly what Mr. Seaman wanted me to think, and he nearly succeeded through his clever juxtaposition of a moral judgment (on the blessedness of renting a house) with a technological problem (of how to build the most houses with the smallest social effort). The two have nothing in common. First of all, nobody in England owns a house except those to whom belongs the ground. With the exception of a few hundred feudal families, nearly everybody pays ground rent. Second, if building materials have to be allocated, it is not a question of owning or renting a house; the question is whether more buildings can be erected in a short time by private builders or by government agencies, and whether it is more essential to provide housing for those who can buy a house or for those who must rent one. This question

should be discussed, and if the British have decided that they need government housing projects, then it does make sense to forbid a private builder the use of his own materials; for he cannot own them without withdrawing them from the market and from projects where they are most needed. . . .

The fallacy of false juxtaposition: We already have mentioned this in passing. Put two things together which do not belong together, and you always have the laughs on your side. Writes Mr. Seaman: "How much happier are our people for owning the coal mines but not their homes." The irony is not very subtle, for the coal mines were not nationalized in order to make the British happy. They were taken in public management because every expert in the coal field, except the feudal owners, had told the British during the last 30 years that their coal industry needed a complete reorganization. . . .

The fallacy of the missing context: I hold no brief for the present British government. I think it has blundered in details more often than it has deserved credit for decisions well taken on over-all policy. However, to blame England's adverse balance of foreign trade on the Labour government to my mind is trespassing the borderline between argument and demagoguery. England has had import surpluses for the last couple hundred years. The surplus was compensated by money revenues which British investments earned in foreign countries. No one denies the fact that England had to sell out her foreign holdings in order to finance the war and that her colonial Empire is disintegrating. . . . All this is discounted in Mr. Seaman's presentation of the British plight. . . .

The fallacy of the outraged individual: Under any government, you can point out cases of great injustice to individuals or of great hardship to certain groups of the population. It is easy to hold "the system" responsible for such failures of individuals to get their due. (This, incidentally, was the favorite Nazi technique of propaganda.) Mr. Seaman points out that under present

labor laws, William Wordsworth probably would be qualified as "a drone, idling in the Lake District." I am constantly receiving books which appear in England, and it strikes me that British poets and novelists are doing extremely well in comparison with American production. If a man is a poet, he probably will write poetry even if he has to comply with labor laws, and I for one fail to see the connection between the hardship which might be worked against William Wordsworth and the efforts of the present British government to implement the Marshall Plan by an appeal to work for all. . . .

There is a case against socialism, a case against the present British government, a case against bureaucracy, but they all would have to be presented more adequately to make the argument stick. On the other hand, there is a case for fairness and logic in public discussion, and that, I am afraid, most magazines in this country fail to take up.

HENRY M. PAECHTER

New York City

SIR: The purpose of my article was to present a fair picture of certain phases of life in England, not to give physical pain to a professional economist with peculiarly sensitive ears. Truly, milk is the product of the cow, and it may astonish Mr. Paechter to learn that the British cow actually produces as much milk as she did before the blessings of socialism descended on her. But between the cow and the consumer are the politicians, the Milk Marketing Board (a prewar creation) and other agencies which somehow reduce the domestic supply to an inadequate trickle. It is difficult to reply to one who thrusts irrelevancies into the discussion, accuses me of drawing conclusions which have not entered my head, and then, appealing to logic, presents his credentials thus: "As far as argument goes, I am interested in cleanliness and sobriety, for I happen to be a former teacher of philosophy." If argument goes no farther than that formidable *non sequitur*, I still may permit myself to state, as proof of my worthiness to be heard, that I take

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baths oftener than our Mr. Gaitskell considers necessary, and have less capacity for heroic potions than some of our elder statesmen enviably and proudly enjoy.

If "big figures" are in themselves fallacious, perhaps Mr. Paechter can explain why the revelation of the existence of great stocks of clothing in the warehouses has caused the government to release much of it, by reducing certain coupon values and by other "concessions" — to use the politicians' word for what happens whenever public opinion or their own prudence counsels them to let go. Clothing prices have been sharply raised by official decree in the last few weeks, and now it is lack of money rather than of coupons that keeps goods on the shelves. The sale of coupons is illegal and possibly immoral, but every newspaper reader knows their price. They were exceedingly dear, but today their cheapness shows clothes rationing to be virtually ineffective except as a device to keep the politicians in control and their hordes of agents in jobs.

Socialist politicians are of a special sort, for they alone are committed to the principle that the State, which is to say the politicians, ought to obtain and control all land, capital and industry. Politicians of other persuasions may be as predatory, but cannot make a virtue of their vices. It is conceivable that a Tory, Liberal, Republican or Democratic government might find it regrettably expedient, in emergency, to subsidize the building of houses for rent and forbid building for ownership, but only a Socialist could uphold this policy on moral grounds, as Mr. Bevan certainly does. "Nobody in England," says Mr. Paechter, "owns a house except those to whom belongs the ground. With the exception of a few hundred feudal families, nearly everyone pays ground rent." The truth, as the real estate advertisements in the *Times* show every day, is that a great deal of property in England is freehold. Much of the property in the ancient cathedral city that I inhabit is freehold. No feudal landowner can take my house from me, but the politicians may, by heaping taxes on it until the weight makes it more profitable for me to toe their line and pay rent to them than to live in my own house. And when my

yells hurt the ears of Mr. Paechter, 3000 miles away, he cannot console me by telling me that my indignation is based on the fallacy of the outraged individual.

It is unfair to accuse me of blaming the Labour government for Britain's adverse balance of trade. I do blame them for aggravating it, by destroying such profitable channels of trade as the Liverpool Cotton Exchange, by tying the skillful hands of British traders, and by attempting tasks for which politicians are ill-equipped. Perhaps a non-Socialist government would have found it necessary to nationalize coal, transport and electricity, but a non-Socialist government, not committed to the doctrine of the divine right of politicians, might have gone about the business more humanely. It may be too early to say that nationalization has proved to be inefficient; it would be misplaced charity to put down to growing pains the sharp rises in railway fares, coal prices, and electricity tariffs that have followed nationalization as the night the day. Socialism is an expensive experiment, and what this great country — possibly every country — needs is cheaper government and less of it.

The picture I tried to draw in my article was social rather than political or economic. We are less free than we were, and those who value freedom are less happy. Not all the encroachments on our liberties have been made in the name of Socialism. Two great wars, with their necessary convulsions, have increased in politicians of all parties the appetite for power and their opportunities to draw ever tighter the lines which, for the furtherance of their own professional interests, they wish the populace to toe. Some of the annoying restrictions that have been recently imposed on us are not much sillier than those that were imposed by successive Statutory Orders between the wars — for example the order that still forbids us, after 8 P.M., to buy cheese but permits us to buy ice cream. For example, also, the daftest liquor laws in Christendom. Like Mr. Paechter, I am interested in cleanliness and sobriety. . . .

H. W. SEAMAN

Norwich, England



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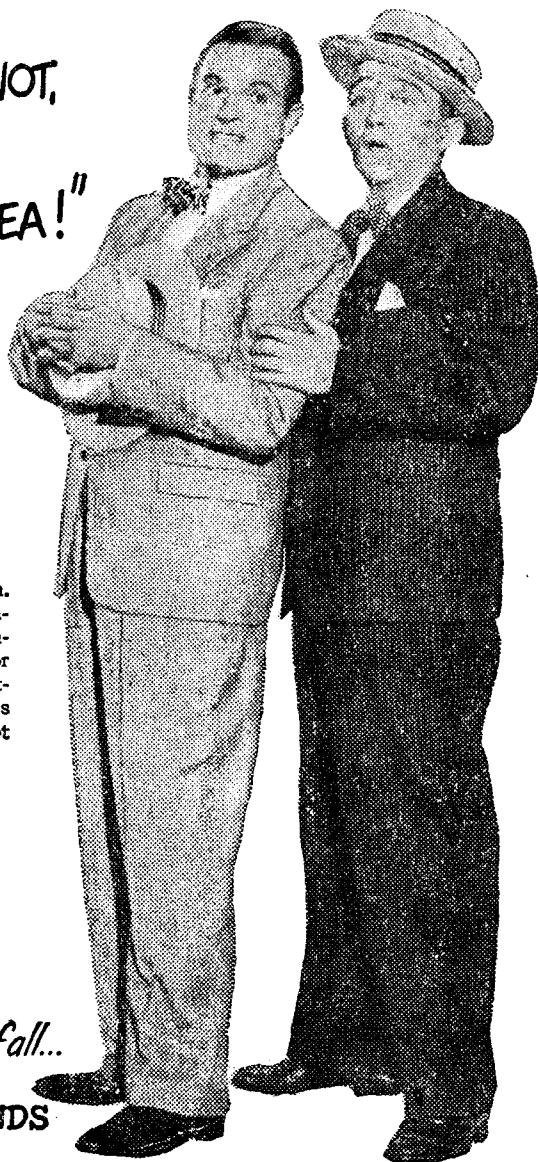
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